

How to Train Your Dragon Master

by The Glass Sea

Category: How to Train Your Dragon

Genre: Angst, Hurt-Comfort

Language: English

Characters: Drago Bludfist, Eret, Hiccup, Toothless

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2014-07-31 02:05:38

Updated: 2016-04-26 03:24:14

Packaged: 2016-04-26 20:16:52

Rating: T

Chapters: 26

Words: 37,049

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: Drago Bludvist knows he needs a successor. Someone to take up his cause, someone who could run his new army. And he knows the perfect person for the job. That boy, with the Soul of a Dragon. The one who taught him how to command his new army. Contains torture, nothing too graphic.

1. Prologue & Pass Me an Ale

****Hey there! Here I am with a new fanfic! I will be rewriting the other two, not to worry!****

****Hope you enjoy!****

****Disclaimer: If I owned How to Train Your Dragon, I wouldn't be sitting here writing this. I'd probably be bribing Dreamworks employees to get HtTYD3 done before 2018...****

* * *

<p>Prologue</p>

* * *

<p>This is Berk.</p>

An island glowing on the horizon, the fires raging from within light up the waves that crash around it, a lovely compliment to blushing sky.

It was really quite beautiful.

The handiwork of Drago Bludvist.

And I.

_Almost six years ago, I lived in a completely different world-
dragons and humans at war._

_Sometimes if I closed my eyes, I could remember it. The roars
piercing through the night, the fires consuming everything in sight,
the screams of children as their mothers and fathers spilled the
blood of the terrible beasts._

Now, this war had begun anew.

The tragic events began about a year ago...

* * *

><p>Chapter 1: Pass Me an Ale

* * *

><p>The roars of humans and dragons alike was deafening.<p>

Hiccup held back the tears that threatened to spill. Instead he
focused on Toothless, who was still glowing blue. Toothless gave him
a big, gummy smile, and the new chief relaxed. Then he saw his
mother, who embraced him again. He returned it tightly- he would not
be alone in his new life.

The worries that had been suffocating him seemed to leave him as he
let go of Valka. She stroked his cheek, then stepped back to allow
the village to congratulate and offer their sympathies for their new
chief.

And the celebrations didn't end there. They moved to the Mead Hall,
toasting to Stoick the Vast, and then to Hiccup, chief of the
Hooligans.

Hiccup sat at one of the tables, Vikings pressed close as they
swapped tales of Hiccup's father, some even taking Hiccup by
surprise. Who would have known that Stoick hadn't been able to grow a
beard until his nineteenth summer?

Astrid squeezed in next to Hiccup, two mugs of ale in her hands.
"Hey, babe." She kissed him on the cheek. "How you doing?"

He grinned. "I'm hanging in there." He took a swig of the ale that
she handed to him. A little dripped down the mug and his hand, and
Toothless butted his head between the two Vikings to lick it off.
"I'll never forget the night Dad got Toothless drunk." He shook his
head at the memory as Toothless licked the rim of the mug, looking
for more ale. The hangover the Night Fury had received the following
morning was not an event that Hiccup wanted to repeat, so he moved
the mug out of the dragon's reach.

Astrid giggled, taking a sip of the beer. "Just relax. I've got your
back. So does Toothless. And your mom..." She sighed. "Your mom. Wow.
It's still hard to believe, you know?"

Hiccup nodded, grinning. "Yeah. We're going to need all her knowledge
with those new dragons." He looked around the room. Dragons and
Vikings were celebrating in song (Hiccup wasn't sure he could tell
the difference between the Viking and Dragon voices), dance, and

storytelling. Or just plain getting drunk.

Like Gobber. The man was holding a mug in one hand, his interchangeable arm was also grasping another mug. His face was bright red, and he was animatedly telling a story, with a hearty drink in between sentences.

The new chief groaned. Great. Just what he needed. He stood, giving Astrid a quick peck on the lips, assuring her he could handle the situation, she was fine where she was. The Vikings roused a new cheer as he crossed the Mead Hall, laughing as he approached the drunk blacksmith.

Gobber brightened at the sight of the boy. "'iccup! I've bean teyllin-"

Hiccup pried the mug from Gobber's hand, aware of all the eyes on the two of them. "You're drunk, Gobber."

"Am not!" The big man protested, trying to get another sip from his prosthetic arm as Hiccup held it back. Hiccup grunted at the drunk man's strength. Getting Gobber home was already an impossible task. The last thing he needed was for the Viking to get more alcohol into his system.

The big man's fake arm was pulled away from his face with some difficulty- Hiccup would have liked to say he had done it himself, but his cousin had stepped in. Hiccup shot Snotlout a smile. Together they led the drunk man back to his house in silence, apart from the blacksmith's ramblings. It was a short walk, but Gobber was close to passing out by the time they got him to bed.

Hiccup and Snotlout stood outside, looking at the stars. "Thanks, Snotlout."

"Anytime, Chief." Hiccup turned to face his cousin, searching for sarcasm, but it seemed genuine.

"You don't have to get formal with me just because-"

Snotlout flung an arm around Hiccup, mussing his hair with his knuckles. "Don't worry, Hiccup, your big, strong, cousin will always be here to look after you."

"Get off me, or I'll set Toothless on you." Hiccup's voice was flat and humorless, but his eyes betrayed his amusement.

Snotlout let go of him immediately, his face a mask of horror. "No, no, not the Night Fury! Anything but that!" He dropped to his knees dramatically, and the two of them erupted into laughter.

We both must have had more beer than we thought. Hiccup grinned. Then again, as the years passed the two had grown closer, not letting their father's rivalry get between them.

They joked around as they headed back to the Mead Hall for another round of ale and laughter.

* * *

><p>Lol, wasn't too bad, right? Next chapter will be introducing a little of the plot! :D
****(Edit: Haha, I wish. Plot starts like in fifteen chapters.)**

Thanks for reading!

2. Future of Berk

Edit: Whoa, I went back and tried to edit these babies, and uh, the file got corrupted or something, so I'm going to try again. I hope this works.

* * *

><p>Chapter 2: Future of Berk

* * *

><p>"Whoa, there, bud!"<p>

Despite Hiccup's hatred for dragon hangovers, it seemed he would be putting up with one tomorrow. Toothless lurched towards Hiccup again, tongue hanging out of his mouth, a silly grin on his face.

Hiccup pushed him forward. Flying home with Toothless in this state would probably end in death. Luckily, they didn't have far to go. Judging by the sky, it was probably close to midnight, and he was leaving early for such a massive celebration as becoming chief. He had wanted to stay longer, but the events of the past few days had caught up with him, and he had fallen asleep at the table. Astrid had awoken him not long after, to take Toothless home.

More cheers had gone up as he had exited, and some laughter at his drunk Night Fury. Hiccup would have to slap some sense into his assistant, the teen had been slipping him alcohol all evening.

They reached the house a few minutes later, Toothless having stumbled down the stairs from the Mead Hall a few times.

Hiccup flung the door open. "Dad, can you give me a-" he froze. Oh. Oh.

"Hiccup?" Valka glided out of the downstairs bedroom, a candle in her hand. She had left the festivities early. It wasn't exactly an easy transition back into human civilization after living with dragons for 20 years. "Oh, Hiccup, you're back." She smiled at him.

"Sorry for waking you, Mom. You should go back to sleep."

Valka took one look at Toothless and chuckled. The dragon had fallen onto the floor, and was drooling a little. "Oh, my. Need some help getting him up the stairs?"

Hiccup grinned. "I figured I would just leave him here."

In the end, it took Valka and Hiccup pulling his front legs, and Cloudjumper pushing from behind to get him into Hiccup's room. The Viking began to remove his armor, but was too exhausted to change into anything else.

Toothless decided that he didn't want to sleep on his bed tonight, and instead curled up on Hiccup's bed, purring loudly. "Useless reptile." Hiccup shook his head, pushing the dragon's paw off his pillow to make room for himself. He squeezed his way into bed, Toothless' tail and wings wrapping around him. "'night mom."

Valka leaned down and was about to kiss his forehead, but paused when she saw the charcoal marking still there. Dipping her fingers in a puddle of Night Fury drool on the wood of the bed, she smeared it on Hiccup's forehead. His eyes, which had already started to close, snapped open. "Mom, what are you-?!"

She rubbed it over the charcoal, shushing him, and then dabbed it off with the fur of his blanket. Hiccup sighed, too tired to care what his wild dragon of a mother wanted to do to his forehead.

Valka bent down, brushed at his bangs, kissed her son goodnight, for the first time in many years.

* * *

><p>The first few weeks of chiefdom were chaos.<p>

There was no other word to describe it. Hiccup and Toothless flew all over the island, trying to keep everyone in order. The two were so busy that Hiccup hardly had time to breathe. Building new houses, repairing the ones damaged during the battle with Drago, managing the academy, making room for all the new dragons; just a few of the many tasks he would complete in the course of a day. It would not be an understatement to say that Hiccup was exhausted.

However, the busy schedule pushed all thoughts of his father out of his head. That is, at least until all the hustle and bustle on the island had subdued.

He still was running the academy, which is where he and Toothless were heading now.

They landed in the middle of the open arena, and the children were on them. Hiccup was smothered with tiny Vikings, all vying for his attention. Toothless was receiving the same treatment.

It was not until the Night Fury jumped up from the ground, and blasted a ball of blue fire into the floor of the arena that the children surrendered. The future of Berk quickly backed away, grumbling about not being able to tell their chief about the amazing adventures they had the day before.

"Thanks bud." Hiccup patted Toothless on the nose, before turning to the class. The Viking children sat down on the cold floor of the academy. He scanned the faces. "Has anyone seen Astrid this morning?"

The children glanced around, confused. "Does anyone kno-"

"Sorry I'm late!" A Monstrous Nightmare thudded to the ground next to Toothless, who snarled.

Hiccup rolled his eyes as a Viking slid out of his saddle. "Nice of

you to show up."

Gustav Larson, at fifteen, was already at Hiccup's height. "You're still mad about me giving Toothless ale, aren't you?"

"Next time you do that, you can clean up the dragon vomit."

Gustav snorted, and winked at the kids, who were giggling over the memory of the drunk Night Fury.

Hiccup turned away, hiding his smile. Hiccup wouldn't ever tell him (Gustav didn't need any more ego than Snotlout), but he wasn't sure he could have run the place without the youth. He was great with the younger ones, and knew the Book of Dragons by heart. Not to mention he would step up and take over during emergencies. Such as the week Hiccup had become chief.

"So, as I was saying before I was so rudely interrupted-" Hiccup sent a mock glare at the Larson boy, who was taking a seat among the Viking children, helping to keep them quiet and attentive. "-does anyone know why Astrid is not here?"

The class frowned, consulting their peers. Adelaide, Snotlout's little sister, tugged on Gustav's arm. "Why's Astrid not here?"

The older Viking just gave her a big grin.

"Astrid is off rounding up the dragon hatchlings." Hiccup announced.

A ripple of excitement travelled through the mob of miniature Vikings.

"Today, you will be finding your dragon-" the arena was a deafening roar of cheers and giggles and shrieks. By the time Hiccup and Gustav got them to calm down, Astrid and Stormfly touched down, along carrying a few baskets full of tiny dragons, renewing the shouts and screams. The twins and Barf and Belch had a few more, and Snotlout, Hookfang, Fishlegs, and Meatlug followed suit, both trying to show off Ruffnut. Imara and her Skrill, Shadowsky, both had arms and claws full of baby dragons. As dragons slid out of the baskets, Hiccup encouraged the oncoming chaos. "Go on! Go find your dragon!" Within minutes, the arena was full of little Vikings chasing down little dragons. And vice versa, in some cases.

Magnus, one of the oldest in the bunch, had a Timberjack in his arms, and was conversing with Fishlegs on names. Crayer and Hagar were fawning over a pair of Rumblehorns, and Mordred was being licked into the ground by a Snaptrapper.

Toothless hummed, setting his head on top of Hiccup's as they surveyed the scene. Every injury, every stupid question, every mistake had just been paid off. Sure, he might regret this once they actually started flying but for now...

A tug at his hand. "Hiccup, I founded my dragon." Skyline, a little Viking girl, shoved a Thunderdrum into his face.

Yup, I'm going to regret this, he thought as it roared into his ears.

* * *

><p>PLEASE WORK
>FANFICTION YOU WILL BE THE DEATH OF ME

3. All for One, and One for All

Here you go.

Quarter: Yup, right after the second movie! I think this chapter will be my response to the rest your review. Well, at least the last part. Eret's one of my favorite characters, as well! :D

* * *

><p>Chapter 3: All for One, and One for All

* * *

><p>The emptiness of his house scared him.<p>

It seemed so large and void without the commanding and heavy influence of his-

No.

Stop.

Hiccup shook the thoughts from his mind, and looked back down at the vegetables and fish that would make up lunch today in front of him. The Chief got swatted on the back of the head. "They aren't going to chop themselves, you know." Gobber informed him with a smile.

Hiccup nodded, turning to smile at the blacksmith. True to his word, the man had been cooking for Hiccup and Valka since... "Sorry, I'll j-"

The Viking frowned, glancing between the tabletop and Toothless, grinning at him angelically. He could have sworn there had been three fish up there. "Toothless..." Hiccup pried open his friends mouth, looking for evidence.

Finding none, Hiccup gave Toothless one last glare before returning to his task. He blinked. Now there was only one fish. Hiccup turned to his right, where the Stormcutter stared down at him innocently.

"C-cloudjumper!" Hiccup sputtered. He expected this kind of behavior out of Toothless, but from the older dragon? Cloudjumper bumped against the boy's chest, and Hiccup sighed.

When he turned back, the remaining fish had gone missing. "Toothless!" Hiccup cried indignantly. Toothless turned his head to look at something behind Hiccup. The chief whirled to find Valka taking a large bite out of the last fish.

"Mooommm!" Hiccup groaned, running a hand through his hair.

She stared at her son. "What?"

The two dragons on either side of him were laughing with their strange dragon snorts. Hiccup shook his head, a smile starting to show. If only dad could be here to see this. And for the first time since his father's death, he was able to think about Stoick without just sorrow. Sure, the longing for the strong, comforting figure his father had been was still there. But there was also the warm, happy memories that now filled his mind.

* * *

><p>Everyone was already assembled when Gustav and Fanghook got to the watch tower. He took a seat in between Fishlegs and Stormfly.<p>

The only light came from the small fire in the middle of the circle of Vikings and dragons.

Snotlout nudged Hiccup, who was trying to yank Astrid's fingers out of his hair. He didn't want another braid, and every time he pulled one out, she'd put three more in. Hiccup glanced up to see Gustav's nervous face.

The young Viking had been asked by Snotlout to meet them up at the watchtower when the moon rose. He had been lying awake in bed, wondering why on earth the practically legendary Dragon Riders would ask him to be there.

"Nice of you to show up." The familiar words from Hiccup were somehow comforting. He obviously wasn't in any kind of trouble, and Gustav felt himself relaxing.

"Soâ€¦ you gonna tell me why I'm here, orâ€¦?"

Tuffnuts glanced around again. "Yeah, what are we here for?" Ruffnut elbowed him and whispered something into his ear. His face brightened stuff. "Does that mean we can all go blow stuff up after?"

This time Astrid elbowed him, much harder. "Just shut up, will you?"

Hiccup stood. "Gustav Larson," he began.

Gustav looked up. "The members of the Dragon Academy would like to formally induct you into the Academy."

The boy frowned, confused, and was about to ask a question when Fishlegs held out a tray with seven mugs on it. "If you'd like to do the honors, Fanghook." Gustav looked between his dragon and the older Viking.

The Monstrous Nightmare seemed to know what to do. He blew fire atop the mugs, the liquid inside lighting on fire. Gustav stared in wonder.

"How's it doing that?" He whispered to Fishlegs.

He turned to whisper back in his ear. "Nightmare sweat and saliva."

"Uhhh..." Gustav blinked as the five older dragon riders grabbed a mug once the flames went out. They all turned to him, and he took the remaining one, dreading the inevitable.

"To Gustav!" The six toasted, arms stretched out to meet the other's mugs.

"To Berk!"

"To the Dragon Academy!"

They gave one last cheer, and drank.

Gustav squeezed his eyes shut, bracing himself for the awful taste. Much to his surprise, it was just beer. There was a small aftertaste of something oily, but it was hardly noticeable. When he opened his eyes, the group was staring at him expectantly.

He grinned at them, then remembered his earlier question. "This is great and all, but didn't I already join the academy?"

Snotlout moved over to clap the younger Viking on the back. "Not that academy, Gustav." Snotlout waved a hand around the circle of Vikings. "Welcome to Night School."

* * *

><p>The cool night air whipped past Eret's ears as Skullcrusher flew through the starry sky. Flying was exhilarating, and it was not a freedom Eret ever wanted to surrender. Skullcrusher was tracking down his ship and crew, and while Eret wanted to set things right by destroying traps he had set out now, he knew it would go faster with his crew.<p>

And also, because he had no clue where half of the traps were. They were all on a map that was held by his right-hand man, and as soon as he found them, they'd set sail to fix things.

But for the moment, Eret was just happy to be with his dragon, free, all worries far from his mind.

He knew Hiccup was a little disappointed when he had told the new chief of his plans. Hiccup was upset to see Eret go, but not as much as other certain individuals. Ruffnut, namely. The former dragon-trapper had been informed the girl had locked herself in her room when she found out he was leaving Berk, but right before he left she had showed up with a few bags.

Eret shuddered at the memory.

She had wanted to go with him.

Hiccup and Astrid had taken care of the awkward situation, and now here he was. Skullcrusher seemed to be slowing now, as they reached a small island. It was dark and cold, and Eret knew the Rumblehorn was probably tired from an all-day flight.

Eret spent a night sleeping under the stars next to his dragon, Skullcrusher's soft snores lulling him to sleep.

* * *

><p>Yup, Eret will certainly play a role in this story. Between the next two chapters, the plot will actually start rolling. Sorry for that, I didn't think all this fluff would stretch so long. Ah well, I enjoyed writing it.

Thanks to all you beautiful people who support me with your words or thoughts. You mean the world to me.

4. Of Mothers and Girlfriends

This chapter is dumb. And I wanted to put more Eret in it, but the stupid thing dragged so long.

* * *

><p>Chapter 4: Mothers and Girlfriends

* * *

><p>"We were all in bed when we heard that old man scream. It woke everyone on Berk, and they were twenty miles out to sea!"<p>

"I've never heard anyone scream that loud." Ruffnut pitched in.

"The Scauldron had Mildew by the seat of his pants. So we used the venom that came out of his-

"Yeah, the needle was like, this long." Tuffnut gestured with his hands.

Gustav was being entertained by the stories that the more experienced Dragon Riders told. An hour had passed since the induction, and the group had chatted about dragons and told stories of adventures years before.

"And just wait until you hear about the time I took on Alvin and a hundred or his men, alone, while Hiccup was in chains and crying like a girl." Snotlout boasted, and immediately regretted his words. The two Viking women all glared at him, ready to show him who the real girl was. "Just kidding!" He amended quickly. "Remember that, Hiccup?"

He glanced over to his cousin, expecting some protest and a bunch of corrections to his story. However, he got no response. The Chief of Berk had his head on Astrid's shoulder, and his expression was unreadable until...

"Whoa, Astrid, is he asleep?"

Astrid blinked, and stared down at Hiccup. "Great Loki, I think he is."

All of the Vikings looked around at one another, snorting and giggling.

"Shut up! You'll wake him!" Astrid hissed, but the corners of her

mouth were turned up. Her boyfriend was adorable when he was sleeping.

"We should totally, like, draw on face." Tuffnut grabbed a stick of charcoal, and his sister followed suit. Astrid shot him a death glare. He shrugged. "What? Shouldn't he like, be running this meeting, or something?"

Astrid placed a hand on Hiccup's head, almost protectively. "Leave him be, he's been working nonstop these past two weeks."

She moved carefully, and stood, lifting him into her arms. Her chief shifted a little, but didn't wake. Toothless opened one green eye, and then yawned and stretched.

Astrid started down the rickety stairs, deciding against flying him back home. She told herself it wouldn't be fair to Toothless, who was right at her side, one eye on his rider the whole time. However, carrying him all the way home was certainly was an appealing option.

She grinned. Hiccup would be so flustered and red when he found out.

* * *

><p>It was Cloudjumper who met Astrid at the door. He turned his head almost all the way around to look at Valka, who leapt from her seat by the fire.<p>

"Great Thor, is he alright?!" Valka pulled Astrid in, misinterpreting Hiccup's limp form.

"He's fine, just sleeping." Astrid assured her. She shifted Hiccup's chin with a hand, it was digging into her shoulder. "He went out while we were up at the watchtower."

Astrid carried the chief upstairs, Toothless right on her heels. It was dark, and she almost tripped over a few charcoal pencils and some unfinished inventions. She rolled her eyes. Boys.

She set Hiccup down in his bed, and Toothless wrapped his gummy jaws around the blanket and pulled it over him. Hiccup stirred a little. "Goodnight, babe." Astrid kissed Hiccup's cheek.

She gave Toothless a scratch before heading back downstairs.

Toothless trotted over to Hiccup and licked his cheek, mimicking Astrid's gesture of affection. However, unlike Astrid's, it didn't go unnoticed. Hiccup stretched, swatting at Toothless' nose. He frowned; he was in bed. He blinked and sat up, wiping Night Fury saliva off his cheek.

He still had his armor on, and boots. And the last thing he remembered was Gustav's induction. He must have fallen asleep or something. He sighed. Chiefs, he was sure, weren't supposed to fall asleep in front of anyone, even close friends.

He was pulling off his armor, and undoing all the leather straps when

he noticed that there were still lights from downstairs. Mom must have left the candles lit, he concluded as he started down the steps.

"...must be exhausted..." His mother was saying. He paused. Who was she talking to? Gobber? "He doesn't talk to me, but I understand why- I was a complete stranger to him just days ago. I'm worried about him."

"He's been doing fine as far as I can tell. Sometimes he gets lost in thought, but that's normal. I'm sure he's still adjusting." Astrid's voice.

Toothless nudged his hand. Hiccup glanced at the dragon, with an incredulous do you believe this?! look. His mother and girlfriend were both worrying over him together.

"I don't know. He's not eating much, he thinks I don't notice him sneaking Toothless and Cloudjumper extra portions. He's hardly sleeping, I can hear him tossing and turning, and I think he's been having nightmares."

Hiccup blinked. How on earth had she figured that out? He had thought he had been very careful with the excess food and would have never suspected that his mother had picked up on it. Or picked up on the nightmares.

"Nightmares?" Astrid questioned.

"I can hear him cry out every once in awhile... I don't know if I should ask him about it, or just ignore it- oh, why didn't I come back to Berk? I'm a stranger in his house, and I have no idea how to reach him." Valka sounded like she might cry.

Hiccup's face was burning with shame. The last thing he needed was Astrid mother-henning him. He already had Gobber for that- wait, did Gobber know about this? He hoped to Asgard he didn't.

The rest of Valka and Astrid's conversation was Astrid comforting his mother, and he didn't stay to listen. Instead, he crawled into bed, pulling off his prosthetic. Nightmares? Ha. Not tonight.

* * *

><p>Hiccup sat bolt upright, his cheeks wet with tears, and his body damp with sweat. He was trembling and clutching tightly at the thin blanket. Toothless was there in a heartbeat, asleep to awake as fast as he was from his bed to the boy's. He nuzzled his head into Hiccup's chest, humming softly, assuring him that he, Toothless was here. There was nothing to fear.<p>

The Viking managed to hold himself together for a few moments before he wrapped his arms around his dragon and let the tears flow. This one had been particularly bad, maybe the worst he had experienced so far. Instead of Drago standing over him, whirling his staff and bellowing like a madman, it had been Stoick. His own father, turning Toothless into a horrific monster with the sole purpose of destroying Hiccup. But as Toothless had began to charge his blast of plasma, Hiccup had given the Dragon Master one last glance.

This Dragon Master was not Drago, or his father. No, this was someone new and unfamiliar. They caught each other's eyes, and in the split second before his death, Hiccup realized who he was looking at.

It was himself.

* * *

><p>Toothless growled inwardly at himself. Usually he would wake the boy at the first signs of a nightmare, but this time, he had slept through all the distressed cries and fidgets of his rider.<p>

The poor child had been suffering, and he hadn't been there.

Hiccup seemed to forgive him that, as he always did when Toothless did something stupid, and did the same thing they had done since the first time Hiccup had been put through a nightmare. The ones he had experienced after the Battle with the Green Death had long since vanished, but Toothless was happy to comfort the boy again.

Hiccup, for the fifth time that week, wrapped his arm around Toothless' thick scaly neck. He hobbled with the dragon's support over to Toothless' bed, where Hiccup sat down on the edge of the wood.

Within seconds, he was enveloped in dragon wings, warm and safe against Toothless' smooth scales.

There, nothing could harm him. There he could sleep in peace.

* * *

><p>Eret grinned as the one fort Valka hadn't destroyed came into view. And there was his ship, anchored and looking to be in good condition. His trackers were going to be surprised when they saw him. No doubt they thought him dead after Astrid kidnapped him.<p>

"Well done, Skullcrusher." Eret smiled at the dragon, reaching down to stroke the beast's scales. "I had my doubts, but here we are."

They landed at the entrance of the fort. Eret slid off the Rumblehorn's back. "You, uh, should stay here." He held out his hands for emphasis, hoping the dragon would understand. He was still pretty new at this. "I don't know how they're going to react if they see you, so it's best if you stay here. For now."

Skullcrusher gave him a look, then wandered off stomping on a barrel to get at the about-to-go-bad fish inside. Eret took that as a sign that the dragon had understood.

Without any further planning, Eret opened the door and stepped into the fort.

* * *

><p>Foreshadowing much?
>Thanks to all my readers, followers, favoriters, and reviewers! You all are the best!

5. The Waiting

**Been a few days, sorry for the waiting!
>Lol that's the name of this chapter
oh my gosh I'm so funny
>yeah okay
sorry**

* * *

><p>Chapter 5: The Waiting**

* * *

><p>Once, when I had first joined Drago, I kept a journal. It was a silly thing, a bunch of paper scraps held together by a spare string I had found.

Since today was such an important day, I had decided to flip through it's pages, and refresh my fading memories. Some days I had written about my life six years ago, other times I had written about my day, trying to force the complicated emotions onto the page so I wouldn't have to deal with them myself.

One page caught my eye.

There was no date, as I had lost all track of time since I had been welcomed by the Dragon Master. However, by the crisp and and fresh paper I knew it was from this summer, when Drago had given it me as a present.

It began with a statement that could be applied to my current condition.

The waiting is driving me mad.

My head is pounding and my fingers are twitching so much, it's hard to write.

I hate the waiting.

It's driving me mad.

"It's driving me mad" was then scribbled all over the page, and I frowned, I couldn't remember what I had been waiting for. I sighed, shutting the journal. And I had been doing so well, working so hard to remember everything.

I now know why I couldn't remember.

The waiting was driving me mad.

* * *

><p>The cold water of the pond lapped at Astrid's bare toes. The late evening sun was shining down on her, making her hair glow golden. She was practically radiating beauty, and Hiccup was stunned by it, as usual.<p>

Now, Hiccup, his mind screamed. _This is it! The right moment! Do

it now!_

Hiccup took a deep breath to calm his nerves. He was going to do it. This time, and this time for sure. This night would not be another failure like the last nine nights.

Astrid turned to look at him as he sat down beside her. She smiled, and he swallowed nervously.

"Astrid, I just, wanted to...tell you- ask you- something." Hiccup stared at his hands, and tried to keep them from shaking and sweating. Why was this so hard?

"Does this have something to do with the last few times you've dragged me all the way down to the Cove on a perfect evening to ask me something?" Her blue eyes were bright with mischief.

Hiccup's courage failed him. "I don't know what you're talking about. I wanted to ask you if..." He wracked his brain for something, anything. "If you could run the Academy tomorrow. I've got some stuff I have to run by with Gobber."

She reached over to take his hand. "Of course."

There was a silence.

Astrid had played dumb for Hiccup's sake, hoping he could do this by himself. But the first time he had asked her down to the Cove, all nerves and jitters, she had put two and two together.

And nine times later, she was tired of waiting. She would do the proposing. It wasn't _that_ unheard of.

Hiccup was staring at the pond when she started to hum. Only a few notes and he had already stiffened, his face an unreadable mask.

When she started to sing, she watched as the blank look melted into one of pain.

Hiccup stared in almost horror as she began to sing his mother and father's song. What was she trying to do? The memories were still so fresh. She saw this, and yet did not stop. If anything, she grew more passionate.

"...with never a fear of drowning."

"And gladly ride the waves of life..."

She grabbed ahold of his hands, and hunched her shoulders, causing him to look down at her.

It was then that it clicked in Hiccup's mind. How she had known what he had been trying to do for ages now, he didn't have the slightest clue.

The flood of emotions was overwhelming. He wanted to laugh, throw his arms around Astrid, he wanted to hug her and cry with relief.

Instead, he joined her for the last part of the verse.

He was sure they had sounded awful, but none of that mattered, not when Astrid grabbed him by the collar and pulled her fiancÃ© in for a kiss...

* * *

><p>The sight of Hiccup and Astrid practically glowing as they walked hand and hand though the village was enough to tell everyone what had taken place.<p>

Fishlegs grinned, holding a hand out to Snotlout. "You owe me."

Snotlout shot him a glare and tossed him a small pouch. "Never would have thought that fishbone would have plucked up the courage this time. ...Or the last nine times."

* * *

><p>"Eret! You're back!" Talon stared in shock at the dragon trapper.<p>

Eret clapped the smaller man on the shoulder. "Thanks for taking good care of the ship."

Talon shrugged. "We searched all over the place for you. One of the men suggested coming back here to wait for you, and if you still gone tomorrow we had planned to leave."

Eret grinned. "Good timing on my part, then."

Talon continued to tell Eret what the crew of trappers had been doing in his absence, and how they had collected supplies to get going again- they should head out as soon as possible and grab some dragons.

Eret listened half-heartedly, wondering how to break it to his crew about Skullcrusher. He would have to approach the topic carefully, a few words wrong, and the men would kill the Rumblehorn. Well, the first step is to get them all in the same room.

It didn't take long to assemble them all.

The former trapper began with the most impacting words he could.

"Drago's dead."

Instantly chaos broke out. Eret let that sink in before continuing. "We know that dragons are not a threat, and now that there is no dragon army, we no longer have to hunt them."

"How did he die?" One of the men shouted out. Eret sighed.

"The Berkians defeated Drago's Alpha, and he fell who knows how many feet. He's dead."

His crew didn't look convinced. Talon's eyes narrowed. "Eret, Drago

is-

A roar ripped through the air, the floor trembling and the noise vibrated in their bones.

The crew stared at Eret, confused. The man froze. "What. Was. That?"

The doors to the fort were knocked down, and the footsteps of dozens of men reverberated in Eret's ears.

The dragon trappers stared at the ground or at their leader, and Eret couldn't fully understand what was going on. Surely-

"So the boy with the dragon soul changed your mind?" The deep, rough voice echoed around the room.

Eret's brown eyes widened. No.

A metal claw grabbed onto the man's shoulders, ripping through furs like they were paper. "I told you I would not be so understanding."

The claws grazed skin, then Eret's world faded into a blur of white pain.

* * *

><p>Yeah, I know the first section is confusing. I hope you're confused. Confusion was the point of that section.

**Thanks to the lovely inabox for checking over the Hiccstrid scene-I was freaking out over it, and thanks to her again for the idea of the villagers betting on how many times Hiccup would chicken out.

>She writes the most adorable RotG stories, so you MUST go check them out. They will give you the feels something serious.

6. Antagonizing Night Fury

**And here we are! The actual beginning of the plot! **

This chapter was supposed to be way longer, but I cut it down a lot. I'm not happy with the ending, it was supposed to go on a little farther, but I guess that'll have to wait for the next chapter.

*****_Special thanks to my beautiful little sister, who reads all my fanfictions like they're the newest Percy Jackson book._*****

* * *

><p>Chapter 6: Antagonizing Night Fury**

* * *

><p>"Is that all you needed, Mulch?" Hiccup wiped his forehead with his sleeve.<p>

"Sure was, Chief. Thanks for ya help." Mulch gazed proudly at his new barn. The other one had fallen into disrepair.

Hiccup patted Toothless on the nose. "Anytime." The Night Fury gave Hiccup a look that clearly protested the way the boy freely signed him up for heavy labor.

Bucket raced past them, herding the chickens into their new barn, his arms full of little chicks. When they were all safely nestled into their henhouse, he thanked Hiccup and Toothless. He tried to strangle the Night Fury in a hug, stroking the dragons scales. Toothless whined, his tail swishing back and forth in discomfort.

Hiccup grinned, it was a rare occasion to see Toothless in such a powerless and uncomfortable position.

He would have enjoyed it more if Bucket hadn't done the same thing to him, crushing him and patting him on the head like he was one of the many animals the man cared for.

Toothless gave a bark of dragon laughter, and Mulch tossed him a fish. "Thank ya too, Toothless. Couldn't have done it without ya."

The Alpha gulped it down gratefully. Maybe heavy labor wasn't so bad.

* * *

><p>Toothless had found a solution to Hiccup's nightmare problem. If the boy just started his night off wrapped in Toothless' wings, no dreams would come.<p>

Or at least, he tried to convince Hiccup of this fact. When Hiccup crawled into his bed that night, still thinking about how he could improve upon Bucket and Mulch's barn, Toothless laid down on top of him.

The chief was crushed by the Night Fury, who hummed contently. An appendage went straight into Hiccup's diaphragm, and all air escaped his lungs. "Too...thless..." The boy choked out, pushing at the giant black body.

Toothless purred as Hiccup pushed him off his upper half. "Alright, bud. Now go to bed." Hiccup pointed to the block of wood.

The dragon grunted. If his human didn't want to sleep with him on his own bed, then they would both sleep in Toothless'. With a gummy but firm grip, Toothless pulled Hiccup by his shirt out of bed.

"Toothless!" Hiccup hissed, not wanting to wake his mother, who was sleeping only a floor below. As the dragon dragged him across the floor, the chief gave in. He enjoyed sleeping in the Night Fury's embrace more than he'd like to admit. It was several times more comfortable than the wooden bed.

The Alpha dragon nuzzled him once they were situated.

That night, Hiccup had no nightmares.

That night would also be the last night boy and dragon would spend together for many months.

* * *

><p>"Well, if yer planning on giving her an axe, at least use this."<p>

Gobber dropped a large hunk of Gronkle Iron on the workbench.

The chief looked up from scattered papers and drawings at the sound. He blinked. "But... That's the last of the batch."

"I know."

"So, shouldn't you be using it for something else?"

Before Gobber had the chance to respond Ruffnut burst into the forge. "He's back! He's back!" She practically fell onto Hiccup, a dreamy, lovesick look on her face.

"Who?"

"Eret, son of Eret!" She beamed up at Hiccup. "Do you think he'll ask me to marry him?"

Hiccup couldn't bring himself to tell her that even if she was the last woman on earth Eret wouldn't marry her, so instead he mumbled a maybe, and ran with her down to the docks.

* * *

><p>It had taken both Astrid and Snotlout to keep Ruffnut off Eret's ship while Hiccup boarded to talk with him.<p>

"I'll marry you, if that would make you feel-" Snotlout got a punch in the jaw.

Astrid kissed Hiccup on the cheek. "Must be serious if he just wants to see you."

Hiccup shrugged. "I'm sure it's nothing." He kissed her hand. "I'll return shortly, milady." With that, he was gone, clamoring onto the boat and vanishing between the crew and boxes.

Talon led the young chief below deck into Eret's quarters.

Charts and maps covered the walls, alongside rough sketches of dragons and a broad collection of large and rather sharp weapons. It was dark, and a few lanterns had been lit. A bed was in the corner, neatly made. Beside it was a desk, papers scattered across it, and a chair, which Eret was perched upon. The former dragon trapper had a heavy fur draped across his shoulders, and he was writing something in a handmade booklet.

"So what's so important that you didn't even want Toothless with me?" Hiccup asked.

Eret spun around, looking surprised. "Oh, Hiccup. It's you."

The chief frowned. Eret looked paler than usual, and his dark eyes looked tired. Before he had time to repeat his earlier question, Eret was talking.

"The crew haven't adjusted to having Skullcrusher wandering around, so I'd rather not have a curious Night Fury antagonizing them."

"Antagonizing?" Hiccup snorted. "Well, Toothless is out with Fishlegs, so you're lucky you didn't offend him."

A ghost of a smile flickered across Eret's face.

Talon held out a mug to Hiccup, and then one to Eret, before walking out. Eret took a small sip and put it down.

"Hiccup, go straight past the stairs and make a right- that's where Skullcrusher is."

The chief blinked at the urgency in Eret's voice. "Um, okay. Is something wrong?" He raised the mug to take a sip of the beer.

"Don't drink that!" Eret stood sharply and knocked it from Hiccup's hands. The boy stared at him in shock, glancing between Eret's dark brown eyes and the mead now all over the floor.

Hiccup's face twisted into some sort of confused smile.

"It's poisoned." Eret finally informed him.

The young chief tried to form a coherent sentence but failed. "You...poison...drink...thought..._why_?"

Eret frowned. "Poisoned isn't the right word. Drugged. It was drugged."

"But why-"

Shouting started above deck.

Eret grabbed Hiccup's forearm. "Listen, Hiccup. Get Skullcrusher, and get as far away from Berk as you can. Now."

"Not until you explain what _exactly_ is going on!"

"There's no time for that. If you don't leave now-"

A drop of red rolled down Eret's arm. Hiccup stared. "Er-eret, are you bleeding?!" Eret jerked back, but Hiccup had already pulled off the thick fur.

Eret's clothes were stained a deep red. "Odin's beard!" Hiccup gasped. "We need to get you to Gothi, or the healer, or Mom..." He trailed off as he got a good look at the wound. Five deep slashes gorged deep into the skin of Eret's shoulder, showing the milky blue of bone beneath. "Who did this to you?"

The man spoke though gritted teeth. "I told you to leave, Hiccup. If you ever want to see your Night Fury again, th-"

"Toothless?" Hiccup's eyes narrowed. "You are going to tell me what's going on _right now_, or Thor help me-"

The upper deck went silent.

The wooden floor beneath them lurched, and Hiccup lost his balance.

"_What_ was that?" He hissed as he got to his feet.

Eret didn't answer, just waited as the door to his quarters was busted down.

A large man towered in the doorway, his face marred with scars from dragons. His green eyes blazed with fire, and his mouth was curled in a constant sneer.

Hiccup couldn't help the shiver that ran down his spine. "Drago Bludvist. I should have known." His sword was out and decorated with flames in seconds.

"If you want your dragon to live, I suggest you put that down." A man said, in an annoyingly cheerful tone. He was standing behind Drago, bare-chested and proudly bearing the mark of Drago.

Hiccup didn't move, not until Drago moved away from the doorway to reveal a lump of black, unmoving.

"_Toothless_!"

* * *

><p>Trust me when I say the cliffie could've been a lot worse.

**Is it wrong that I picture Hiccup speaking with a Scottish accent all the time? Like still Jay voice acting, just with a Scottish accent. I guess I've been listening to David Tennent read his voice for too long... **

**Thanks to everyone who has read this story! You all are amazing!
**

7. Fire

So yeah, the time that it took me to write this amazingly short thing is inexcusable. However, in my defense, I had to re-write the whole thing multiple times because I disliked it.

Again, I'm sorry.

* * *

><p>Chapter 7: Fire

* * *

><p>I hate the waiting.<p>

It's driving me mad.

_I'm alone. _

_It's dark. _

_They think I'm asleep, harmless, not dangerous. _

_I found a pencil, made of charcol, and I'm scribbling the words, the only constant in my life so far. _

_I write it on the floor, on the walls, on the bed. _

_When I run out of room, I write it on my arms. _

The waiting is driving me mad.

* * *

><p>Drago stood between Hiccup and his dragon, a wicked grin plastered on his scarred face.<p>

The young chief glowered dangerously at the madman. "What did you do to him?"

The Dragon Master tossed something at Hiccup, something light and Hiccup almost missed catching it in his free hand.

He didn't have to look down to know what it was.

Dragonnip.

Hiccup frowned, looking between he blades of grass and his dragon, who was unmoving and silent, as if asleep.

Drago stepped aside, allowing Hiccup a path to the Night Fury.

The Viking, never turning his back to Drago, rushed to Toothless' side, placing his calloused hand on the Night Fury's nose. "Toothless? Bud?" There was no purr of contentment, no hum of bliss. The dragon was stone cold, as if dead. Only the slow, deep breathing convinced Hiccup that Toothless was alive.

"What did you do to him?" Hiccup repeated, a little louder, stroking Toothless' frigid scales with one hand, as if the action would wake him. This was not the work of Dragonnip, as far as he knew. He raised his sword a bit higher, meeting Drago's mad eyes.

When the answer didn't come, Hiccup began to repeat himself again. "What did you-"

The bare-chested man beside Drago launched himself at Hiccup, while Talon jumped at the Viking from the other direction.

In Hiccup's defense, it was two on one, both were large men, and the chief went down fighting.

Eret watched the scuffle, his mind distant. They'd have a hard time containing the chief.

Talon yelled for another dragon trapper to bring him another mug of the drugged ale. Hiccup was struggling under Drago's man, seething with anger.

Cup in hand, Talon grabbed at Hiccup's nose, holding the cup to the Viking's lips. Hiccup's face was purple by the time he gasped for air, and Talon poured the liquid down his throat. The two men released him as Hiccup coughed and spat up as much of it as he could. However, as soon as he stood, the drug was already starting to take effect. His head spun, and the floor beneath him was lurching.

But when he looked around, he realized that the floor was really lurching. The whole boat was rocking violently from side to side. No one seemed to be surprised by this new installment, and simply grabbed onto something until the rocking ceased.

It was then the first wave of pain hit Hiccup full force. Sharp fire burned in his stomach, and he doubled over in pain, his knees giving out underneath him. A groan escaped him. "Oh, Odin."

"Take him to the other boat. I don't want him and that dragon within a hundred yards of each other." Drago's voice came from somewhere outside of the white pain that was clouding Hiccup's vision as he writhed on the floor.

"The Night Fury's in a sleep coma, he can't even-" There was a shout of pain from whichever crew member had protested Drago's order.

Yet the order was still carried out, and Hiccup felt himself being dragged across the floor. He was barely holding in screams of pain, the motion causing the excruciating fire to grow.

By the time they had got him onto the other ship, the young chief was oblivious to all that was happening around him, his cries now reduced to whimpers of pain.

And Toothless slept on.

* * *

><p>I've decided to add in some elements from the book- such as sleep-comas, which I found was perfect for this scene.

Oi, school just started, so life is insane, but I'm hoping to have the next chapter pretty soon! Sorry for the wait!

8. Ships

**Yup, here you go. The only reason I wrote this whole thing in one evening was because a certain someone convinced me too. So happy birthday, Caylee! Love ya, sister! **

* * *

><p>Chapter 8: Ships**

* * *

><p>Night School was cancelled that evening. After the Berserker raid, no one was in the mood for a friendly chat and a beer. Fortunately, there were no casualties, and only a few major injuries. The Berserkers had retreated quickly, and Astrid was mulling this fact over and over in her head.<p>

She was sitting on the edge of one of Berk's cliffs, Stormfly's head in her lap, purring contentedly. The sun had just sunk over the horizon, the sky melting into a deeper shade of blue every second. She opened her mouth, about to ask Hiccup what he thought. With a start, she remembered that she was alone. She frowned. She reminded herself that he was probably back at the village, sorting out the aftermath.

Her frown only grew when she realized she hadn't seen him at all during the skirmish. Or Toothless. Surely he wasn't still with Eret; he wouldn't leave Berk to fend for itself. Astrid scratched at Stormfly's scales. "C'mon girl, let's go find Hiccup." Stormfly blinked up at her with yellow eyes, then scrambled to her feet, happy to take a flight.

* * *

><p>"What do you mean, the ship's gone?" Astrid had her fist full of Tuffnut's shirt.<p>

"Yeah, it just vanished. Guess Eret left during the raid." Unperturbed by the fact that he was dangling a foot in the air by a very angry Viking girl with an ax, he grinned at his sister.

Ruffnut burst into tears, and instantly Snotlout and Fishlegs were at her side, cooing and fussing over her.

"It's okay, I'm here."

"Yeah, Eret could never compare with this hunk of Viking, anyway."

Astrid dropped the twin. He, nor any of the other Vikings had seen Hiccup during the raid, or anytime afterwards. So where was he?

* * *

><p>Astrid gripped her ax tighter, marching towards Hiccup's home. He'd better have one heck of an explanation, Odin help him.<p>

Valka was tending to an injured Zippleback when Astrid found her, a young Viking anxiously petting Cloudjumper as he watched Vaka examine his dragon.

The mother of the chief smiled warmly at Astrid, and finished binding up the dragon's wing. The Viking happily thanked her, and Valka turned her attention to Astrid once he had left.

"Good afternoon, Astrid."

"Valka, tell me Hiccup's here." Astrid blurted out, unable to

exchange pleasantries.

Valka blinked. "No, he's not. Is something wrong?"

Astrid couldn't help the groan of frustration from escaping. "No one's seen him since Eret arrived. I've asked almost everyone in the village- nobody saw him during or after the raid."

Concern crossed over the older woman's face. "I'm sure he's out with Toothless, thinking it over."

"He's going to wish he was still out with Toothless by the time I'm done with him." Astrid informed her, touching her ax. "I've been all over the island looking for him!"

If Valka was worried about Astrid harming her son, she didn't show it. "I'll keep an eye out tonight," Valka promised. "He needs to be here for Berk- most of all now."

An unspoken worry went between the two women. _When would Dagur return?_

* * *

><p>Hiccup did indeed wish he was out with Toothless.<p>

He had never been in so much pain, even after his amputation.

What seemed like hours later, the eternal fire subsided, leaving him exhausted, covered in sweat, dry-mouthed and confused. He blinked around at his surroundings, trying to get his bearings. He was in the darkness, the only light coming from a grate above him. By the looks of it, the sun had just set.

He felt around his prison- the whole thing was wooden, and not very large. It was only four paces wide and seven long. No doors, no windows, only the grate, a few feet above his head, which he guessed would still be out of reach even if he jumped. Not that he could stand up, let alone was a slight rocking motion, which confirmed Hiccup's belief that he was on a ship.

His sword and armor was gone, he was left only in his shirt, pants, and boot. They had taken his prosthetic as well.

Hiccup leaned against the wall, taking a deep breath and trying to figure out what exactly had happened.

And how he was going to get out.

* * *

><p>I'm sorry, it's pretty short, but I figured, hey, whatever.

It's school, I've got papers, math problems, and other busywork to do. Yuck. Hope ya'lls homework load isn't too heavy.

Just thought I'd go ahead and tell y'all that for the whole of November, I will not be updating! That's right, a whole month with no updates! I'm participating in NaNoWriMo, and for those of you who don't know what that is, it's a program where you write a novel in a month. If you're doing the Youth Program as well, tell me your username so we can hook up and watch how the other's doing! :D

* * *

><p>Chapter 9: Colder**

* * *

><p>For the past few years, Fishlegs and Hiccup had collaborated on writing down the events that happened on Berk. Considering that Hiccup was no where to be found, it was up to Fishlegs.<p>

Fishlegs poised his charcoal stick above a new, blank page, with a small tear in the right hand corner. He thought for a minute, then began to scratch out onto the paper:

September - -

Peace Treaty with Bereserk was violated. The Berserker armada arrived on Berk's waters at sundown. They attempted a raid, and had burned down serval houses and the forge before we had organized ourselves. When we sent out dragons to destroy their ships, they retreated. We had no casualties, and a few major injuries.

* * *

><p>Gustav Larson had been the only one to think about asking the children.<p>

There was silence for a few seconds, and then the whole Academy erupted into chaos.

Minutes passed before they passed into silence again, and only because of Fanghook's roar aimed right at them.

"So," Gustav began again. "Did anyone see Eret's ship leave?" When they all began to chatter he added, "One at a time!"

* * *

><p>A few minutes later, he was flying across Berk towards Astrid's house. Mordred was whooping with joy, both hands in the air- her Snaptrapper had never gone quite so fast. They landed outside of Astrid's door, and Gustav practically dragged the little Viking inside.<p>

"ASTRID!"

Astrid came tumbling down the stairs, one hand pulling on a boot, her other tying her hair in a braid. She blinked at him, somewhat blearily. "What?" She demanded, glowering at him.

Gustav grinned. "Did you just wake up?" He had heard that the blonde girl wasn't a morning person, but he didn't think she actually got out of bed at noon.

The growl Astrid aimed at him was undecipherable, and Gustav decided to drop the question. She looked dangerously close to destroying whatever object was closest, and at the moment, that was him.

"Alright then. Mordred, tell Astrid what you told me, and don't leave any details out, okay?"

Astrid leaned back on her heels.

"Odin's beard. I..." She turned to Mordred. "Go run off and play or something. Gustav and I need to talk."

The little Viking beamed, and skipped out of the Hofferson home.

Astrid stared after her. "Oh, Thor, Gustav. Dragons? Do you really believe that?"

Gustav shrugged. "She's never made up stories before. You know the only Viking who has enough imagination for that is-"

"-Hiccup." Astrid finished. She sighed, plopping down into a chair. "But you don't think that Eret...?"

"I've never met him." Gustav reminded her. "I guess the only way to know is if that mark is there."

* * *

><p>They flew down to the dock in silence.<p>

The two Vikings paced up and down the planks, looking for the tell-tale sign Mordred had described. Astrid reached the very end of the dock, and paused. She drew her breath in sharply. "She was right." She said softly.

Then the horror of what had taken place on this very dock sunk in.

In front of her boots, burnt into the wood, was the all too familiar sign of Drago- the symbol that was burned into the chest of those who crossed him.

* * *

><p>Every tracker dragon on Berk was sent out after Hiccup. Since the forge had burned down, items of their chief were in short supply, and they used anything they could find. His blankets, the stuffed dragon Valka had made him, his helmet, Toothless' old saddle, and so on.<p>

More than anything in the world, Astrid wanted to be looking for him, but instead, she sent Stormfly with the other trackers, and helped organize Berk.

The whole village was up in arms over Hiccup's kidnapping, but they couldn't do anything until they found him.

With every hour that crept by, the atmosphere just got tenser and tenser. Because with every hour that passed, that meant Hiccup's trail grew that much colder.

* * *

><p>Haha, no updates on Hiccup this chapter, sorry! (Not sorry)

****One more word: _FORESHADOWING _****

****For those of you who picked up on what I mentioned above, I'm trolling and giggling happily. Hope you're gaping at me and about to react like Caylee did when I told her what was going to happen. (Which was slamming a pillow around repeatedly, only pausing to scream in it until she decided to scream at me instead.) ****

****im going to do more trolling nowwwwww****

****byeeeeeee****

10. Blacked Out

****So. Yeah. "No Updates in November." Well, I missed this lump of a story. And all of my HtTYD stories. A lot. So here. What the heck.****

* * *

><p>Chapter 10: Blacked Out

* * *

><p>Hiccup's first night in the ship crawled by slowly. He watched the stars as they gleamed down at him through the grate. It was freezing, and he wished he had Toothless' warmth behind him.<p>

But he was alone. He tried not to think about the Night Fury, and instead turned his mind to his friends. If Astrid was here, she'd be braiding his hair, or snuggling up next to him after checking and re-checking to make sure there were no escapes.

Fishlegs would be cowering in the corner, worrying over what was going to happen. Ruffnut and Tuffnut would be goofing off while Snotlout tried to hit on Ruff.

Hiccup would give almost anything to have any one of them with him. The chief wouldn't have felt so nervous if he knew where he was. He was on a ship, yes, but he couldn't detect any waves. And yet, it seemed as if they were moving, since the ship jerk to one side suddenly, but never a rocking motion.

Curling into the corner of his prison, Hiccup tried to sleep. He wasn't very successful, as he'd wake every few hours, a nightmare fresh on his mind. He would try to put it out of his head, and slid back into the black dreams that awaited him.

* * *

><p>Astrid and Snotlout were working side by side, repairing Mildew's house (again). It was all they could do to pass the time, the hours spent waiting for the tracker dragons to return were tense, to say the least.<p>

A shout went up through the village. A man ran up to Astrid's ladder. "They've returned!" He yelled up at her.

Astrid nearly fell off her ladder in the hurry to clamor down. She ran, stumbling in her haste, to the docks, Snotlout on her heels.

Strangely enough, there was only a few men filing off the boat, and the Vikings were ambushing them with questions. Snotlout pushed his way through the crowd, allowing him and Astrid access to speak to the leader of the search.

The questions came rolling off her tongue, and Hoark couldn't keep up. "What happened? Did you find them? Where's Hiccup? Where are all the dragons? Where are the rest of the men?"

Hoark blinked at her, and Astrid sighed. "What happened?" She repeated.

He rubbed his hands together nervously. "Where do I even start? We had finally caught up to them, and the dragons were hot on the trail. Soon we could see them- and just as Morderd said- the Bewilderbeast and Drago's dragons were flying the ships in the air. If we didn't have a few dragons pulling us in the boats, we never would have caught them. They're headed northeast."

He paused, hesitating, but when he met Astrid's icy, impatient eyes, he hurriedly continued.

"They must have spotted us, because the next thing we knew, the Bewilderbeast roared, and, um, all the dragons flew off."

"All of them?" Astrid's croaked, unable to believe it.

"Just like Drago did when he came to Berk," Hoark reminded her. "So then we just sailed back here. Since we didn't have any dragons."

The young Viking in front of him was turning a unique shade of white and red. So it came as a relief to Hoark when Astrid simply told him to go home and rest.

* * *

><p>Valka crouched on the floor of the arena, trying to make sense of the runes as Gothi wrote them. Gobber was staring at the words on the Elder's other side, while Astrid scratched Stormfly impatiently.<p>

They had told Gothi of the failed rescue attempt, and she had started scratching runes into the sand. Finally she finished. All Vikings present looked to Gobber. He scratched his nose, thinking. "There's something about asking for help, and the restâ€| eh." He studied them closely. "Something about Pig Kidnappers." He finally concluded proudly.

Gothi smacked him on the head, hard, with her staff. Gobber took another look at her scribbles. "Ah, bog kidnappers."

Astrid groaned. _Please let him be wrong, Thor, please let him be wrong..._

The blacksmith didn't get bashed by Gothi. "Bog Burglars it is, then."

Oh, great Odin above, what was Gothi thinking?

* * *

><p>Hiccup woke up with a jolt.<p>

The grate opened with an agonizingly loud noise, and Hiccup squinted up at the light from above. "Good morning, Sunshine. Big day today, huh?" The chief recognised him as the man who had helped Talon with his kidnapping.

The man leaned down, to help pull Hiccup up. Hiccup got up, standing uncertainly on his one foot, before grabbing the man's hands.

He was jerked upwards, and knocked down onto the deck of the ship. The man beamed at him, practically radiating happiness. "Hope you're nice and ready for today." He leaned close to Hiccup. "We'll probably be spending most of it together!"

The stench of his breath made Hiccup want to gag, but he didn't. He wished he had some biting, sarcastic remark to spit at the man. But he didn't. The look in the smiling eyes of that man was absolutely terrifying. Whatever they Drago had in store for him, it would probably be painful.

One of Drago's men helped Hiccup depart from the ship, and Hiccup glanced around, trying to find Toothless in the maze of boats and people. No great, cat-like black dragons were found.

The chief almost forgot all about Toothless when he saw the fortress that awaited him. It was massive, the wooden and stone stronghold almost completely black. It was easily the height of the large mountain that the Mead hall was built into, maybe even a bit larger.

It was armed with thousands of men, and heavily armored dragons. Hiccup had thought that Drago had brought all of them when he had come to take down Valka's Alpha. He had been wrong. Drago's army was more massive than he could have ever imagined.

_Odin help us all. _

* * *

><p>So apparently, "grate", "ladder" and "sighed" aren't words according to FanFiction. So that happened. Just thought I'd share because it was strange. XD

Well, it's been over a month. It hasn't felt like a month... to me, at least. Sorry. I'm about to go on break, so hopefully I'll have a good buffer of chapters for when school starts back up again. Thanks to all of you who have supported this story so far, and if you've been waiting for the torture, it starts here. And it's very light, but it will probably intensify soon. :D

* * *

><p>Chapter 11: I'm Stubborn.

* * *

><p>I hate the waiting. It's driving me mad.

_I stood, staring off into the distance. Drago was beside me, holding a companionable silence. No words needed to be said. I tapped my fingers on the ship's rail, impatient and eager to reach our destination. To get this over with, some part of my mind whispered- the deepest part- that was screaming against the actions I would soon take. _

Traitor, my mind whispered. Traitor.

_I shook my head. It was just the waiting. _

It was driving me mad.

* * *

><p>To say Astrid didn't like the Bog Burglars would be an understatement.<p>

Astrid despised them.

Camicazi, the daughter of the Bog Burglar's chief, Bertha, was the worst. She was an amazing fighter, a fantastically good burglar, a master escapee and spy, and infuriating sharp-witted.

But none of those things even came close to why Astrid hated her.

Camicazi was Hiccup's friend.

And she was jealous.

Camicazi had been Hiccup's first friend, long before Astrid had even considered Hiccup as something more than a village failure. It wouldn't be so bad if Hiccup didn't unintentionally ditch her when Camicazi came around.

It wouldn't be so bad if Camicazi wasn't so incredibly smug about it.

Astrid slammed her axe into ground, barely suppressing her rage. She knew everyone was staring at her, but none of them really blamed her. She had lost her boyfriend and her dragon less than two days, and now she found out that her least favorite person was coming to help them rescue her boyfriend, because Astrid and all of Berk couldn't seem to

do it.

Astrid stormed off without another word.

* * *

><p>Rogue dragged Hiccup into the fortress, not bothering to slow his pace for someone who only had a leg and a half.<p>

Hiccup made mental notes as he entered, the way the doors were built, the overall structure, what type of wood they were using to light the torches, anything to distract him from what was coming, which he was sure wasn't going to be pleasant.

Rogue had introduced himself on the way in, speaking in his annoyingly cheerful tone that was much more terrifying than anything Hiccup had seen so far. "So, you'll be right down this hall, and down the left, down the stairs, and then your own personal cell! You'll love it there, I'm sure."

Hiccup was about to reply, but then he was being dragged down stairs, and by the time they reached the bottom one, he was leaning completely on Rogue. Which was frustrating, not to mention embarrassing.

"You could save yourself the trouble and give me my leg back."

"You're a smart boy, Hiccup. Drago's not taking any chances. And neither am I." He opened up a door to a surprisingly largish cell. It was about the size of Hiccup's bedroom, maybe a bit larger. Hiccup didn't have much time to look around before he was shoved into it, the door slammed and locked. "Don't worry, little chief!" Rogue called from outside. "I'll be back soon! But first, I've got a certain dragon to take care of!"

Hiccup could hear the retreating footsteps. Hope fluttered in his heart; he must have been talking about Toothless. He had to get out of here, and wake up his dragon. Then they needed to get home as fast as possible.

The door was locked, that much Hiccup could tell. Busting it down wasn't an option: it was a thick and heavy door. He reached for the hinges. Removing them was out of the question: they were firmly wedged in there. Hiccup huffed and sat against the wall. For now, it looked like he was stuck.

Fear was slowly crawling its way into him. Nothing about this situation looked good. He played with the hem of his shirt, absent-mindedly. All he could really do was wait for Rogue, or Drago, to come back. The Viking leaned his head back against the wall. The waiting was going to drive him mad.

* * *

><p>"So, Hiccup. Want to talk to me about the witchcraft you've been using on those dragons?"<p>

"Not particularly. You seem to know quite a bit about me already, how about we talk about you?" Hiccup paused. "Like why you joined Drago,

or something."

"Much as I'd like to share, we came here to talk about you." Rogue smiled at him, cheerful as always.

"Okay then." Hiccup thought, stretching out his good leg. "Um, well, I'm Hiccup, I'm from the Hooligan tribe, um, I'm the chief of the Hooligan tribe. Astrid Hofferson and I are engaged, and that's about all I can think of. I'm afraid I'm not a very interesting person."

Rogue leaned in so close, Hiccup could smell his breath, which was only a bit worse than Toothless' in the morning. But not by much. "Oh, but Hiccup, I find you very interesting."

Hiccup found himself face to face with a leather whip. Rogue allowed him to get a good look at it. "Me and my dear friend here are very, very interested in you. So I suggest you better start thinking up some interesting facts about yourself, because my friend here has a habit of lashing out at people when she doesn't get her way." Rogue chuckled at his own pun.

The Viking laughed with him to be polite, but it came out a little more nervous than he had hoped. He had been expecting torture, but he hadn't really explored the notion. He was trying to prepare himself as best he could. "So, ah, I just thought of something."

The whip left his immediate view, falling to Rogue's side. "Really now? You're free to share whenever you like."

"I'm very stubborn."

* * *

><p>Hiccup's stubbornness only brought him many rounds of pain. Five lashes, each burning deep into his skin, and it was only the beginning.<p>

Hiccup stood in the corner of his cell, bound to a pole that he assumed was there for that purpose. He let his mind wander, wondering what other methods Rogue would take after this one. At least he knew that they didn't just want to kill him, they wanted information, and as long as he kept that safe, he'd stay alive.

A tap on his shoulder. "Still there, little chief?" Rogue's grinning face was only inches from his own. "Thinking about something that you wanted to tell me?"

"I, uh..." Hiccup's mind raced, the pain on his back constantly interrupting his train of thought. "I'm a black-smith when I'm not busy chiefting."

"Anything else?"

Hiccup, unable to think of anything else to say, shook his head. He closed his eyes, listened to Rogue's footsteps back away, listened to the whip crack in the air, felt another flame across his back.

At least it was only a whipping. A whipping he could stand. For now.

* * *

><p>Thank you to all of you people who review, follow and favorite! It means the world to me- I can't tell you how happy I get when I get an alert email. Thank you all so, so much! Cookies to all of you!

12. Of Terrors and Nightmares

****HAPPY (BELATED) SNOGGLETOG!**

>I hope all of you had a great Snoggletog. Thank you all for your many kind reviews, I appricaiate them so much! They're so encouraging and sweet!

****_Vika and Felix_:** Of Eret and Drago... one of these appears in this very chapter.

>And the other doesn't, but I still have many plans for him.

* * *

><p>Chapter 12: Of Terrors and Nightmares

* * *

><p>He had lost track of time since he had come to his cell. He had endured several more whippings, each one more intense than the last. He was given food at random intervals, which didn't help him figure out how long he had been there.<p>

His thoughts mostly stayed with Toothless. He worried constantly, hoping that he was still alive, still well, and uninjured. Hiccup was in the middle of practically daydreaming about seeing the dragon again when the door to his cell opened.

Rogue was standing in the doorway. He tossed something at Hiccup, something heavy, and it smacked into Hiccup. It hurt, but the joy of what the item was overcame the pain. His prosthetic!

"Drago's growing impatient. So we're going to try something new today. We're going on a little vacation."

Hiccup doubted that this vacation would end well for him.

* * *

><p>It felt wonderful to be on his own feet again. But he didn't have long to rejoice, as their walk was short. Rogue led him into a large arena, not much different than the one back home, except that this one was bigger.<p>

And this one had Drago standing in the middle of it.

"Where's Toothless?" Hiccup demanded as soon as he was face to face with the Dragon Master. When Drago didn't answer him, Hiccup repeated himself, slightly louder. "Where's Toothless?"

"Your dragon is alive. I'd be more concerned about your own problems,

though." Drago and Rogue left Hiccup there, in the center of the ring, and slammed the iron door shut behind them.

Hiccup stared around, while Drago and Rogue waited expectantly, staring down at him through the metal cage above. A small door, on the side of the arena was opened. "Use your sorcery and gain its trust!" Drago demanded.

Hiccup watched as the Terrible Terror escaped into the sunlight, ran around three times, then proceeded to run straight into the wall. He sighed, and sat down where he was. He wouldn't, of course, show Drago anything.

The Terror, after its crash into the wall, spotted Hiccup, and gave him a wide berth, running around him a few times. Hiccup watched it out of the corner of his eye. When the Terror finally realized that Hiccup wasn't coming after him, it closed in its circle a little more, and a little more. Within five minutes, the little dragon was so close Hiccup could reach out and touch it. He didn't, though.

Apparently the Terror judged Hiccup as harmless, and crawled into his lap. Hiccup hadn't moved the entire time.

Rogue's jaw dropped. "How is he doing that? I didn't even see him enchant the beast!"

Drago simply glared. Dragging the secrets out of the boy was going to be a lot harder than he thought. "Bring out the Nightmare." He said, and Hiccup grimaced.

Wonderful. Because he just couldn't _wait_ to deal with a giant dragon that could set itself on fire.

Rogue's voice echoed down to him. "You'll need all your magic for this one. It hasn't been fed in a week!"

Hiccup groaned, leaning back on his hands. Even better. The Terror raised its head with alarm as one of the dragon's cages was opened. He was struck with a strange sense of déjà vu as the Nightmare burst out, hopping mad and flames going every which way.

Its great eyes focused in on Hiccup. Despite the fact that Hiccup was in a rather unfortunate situation, he couldn't help but stare at this particular Nightmare. She, Hiccup noted, was a beautiful array of greens and blues. She had much more color on her than most Nightmares he had seen, and he wondered if their color might have something to do with where she had been born.

He didn't have time to reflect upon the subject much longer, as she was coming towards him. The Terror skittered up Hiccup's shirt, latching its claws into his hair. It hissed in fear, trying to hide behind Hiccup's head. Hiccup stayed right where he was. Showing fear, or any kind of retreat would be a sure way to make himself dinner.

The Nightmare came towards him, slowly. Hiccup knew he was being stalked, and only watched her intently, making sure she knew that he had seen her. He tried to remember everything that he and Snotlout had discussed about Nightmares. Everything that was in the Book of

Dragons. He just hoped that a starving Nightmare wouldn't be that much angrier than a wild one.

As she drew closer, he could see a web of scars now marring her wings, and patches of pink where scales had been ripped free. Beaten and starved.

The Nightmare was observing him, too. He was scraggly, for a human. Wouldn't make much of a meal, but at least it would be something. She stopped, her tail sweeping the ground, her whole body poised to attack. The human stood up, slowly, and it was then that she smelled it.

Alpha.

Below the smell of grime, blood, and viking, she could smell something distinctly Night Fury. That was a warning in and of itself. But this wasn't any Night Fury. This was an Alpha.

This human was marked by an Alpha, and harming anything that belonged to an Alpha was suicide. She backed away slowly.

Hiccup watched her, confused. He hadn't done anything, and yet this dragon was leaving him alone. She even appeared to be scared of him.

The Terror skittered up onto the top of his head, growling at the Monstrous Nightmare, thinking that it had frightened off the beast. Hiccup shook his head. At least he didn't have to show Drago anything.

Drago was absolutely furious. The boy wasn't doing anything, and the dragons weren't harming him. He yelled, slamming his staff into the metal cage above. The Nightmare flamed up once again, expecting punishment. The Terror dove down into Hiccup's shirt, squeaking.

He needed to find another way to learn how to gain the dragon's trust. It was the way he would run his new army, one that was invincible. Drago turned away, already trying to find a solution.

A few men ran in, with whips and swords and axes, and cornered the Nightmare. One of them lunged towards her, in order to get her to retreat back into her cage.

"No!" Hiccup cried, rushing towards them.

Drago turned around, watching closely.

Hiccup grabbed the arm of the nearest man. "There's no need to hurt her. Just leave her be."

They looked to Drago, who gave them a sign to stop. They backed off, but kept their weapons at the ready. This Nightmare had been one of the few dragons that continually fought back. She was vicious, and had killed a few men before Drago had stepped in with the Alpha.

The chief approached the frightened dragon slowly. He spoke softly, under his breath, so that the men couldn't hear him. "It's okay. I won't let them hurt you." The Nightmare allowed him to approach, her flames subsiding. Hiccup kept talking, leading her back towards her

cage. She followed, still keeping a wary eye on the Vikings.

As soon as she was in her cage, the stone doors were shut as fast as possible. Hiccup glared around. "Someone go feed her, please. Come on, really?" He aimed this last part at Drago, who stood watching from above.

Drago was amazed. This boy was certainly a Dragon Master. That dragon had willingly gone back into its cage. He hadn't threatened it, he had only spoke to it, and it had listened.

And soon, the dragons would listen to him, Drago Bludvist, and would fight for him. Not because they had to, but because they would be loyal to him.

It was a good thought.

* * *

><p>I'm sorry for this chapter, honestly. It's certainly not one of the better ones.

**So, yup. This was going to be a much longer, much better chapter, but I had to split it, but I can tell you that the next chapter is a lot better, and it was also a lot more fun to write. And even that chapter had to be split. **

**Okay, hopefully I didn't confuse anyone with the whole "smelling the Alpha" thing. In my head, at least, dragons probably have the scents of whoever they're closest to, and dragons can pick that up off of humans as well.

>Unless if you thought that you could get into a fight with the Alpha and come out alive, you're not really going to mess with anything that's his, no matter what it is. Gosh, I'm bad at explaining things, I'm sorry.

Thank you for all of your support, and love- everything is appreciated.

13. A Chief Feels No Pain

**Well.

>Just on a rather strange note: if any of you want a hint at what I have in plan for this story, go listen to the song "Torture" by Les Friction. It's been one of my main inspirations for this story. And it's also an amazing song. I dunno if you'll pick up what I'm planning, but some of you might go 'ah' later on when we get there. **

Onward to my favorite chapter thus far!

* * *

><p>Chapter 13: A Chief Feels No Pain

* * *

><p>It had all gone well until Drago's men demanded the Terror, who was still hiding in Hiccup's shirt. He had hoped they had forgotten

about it, and maybe he could have had a companion in his long hours of loneliness.<p>

Grumbling under his breath, he pulled out the Terror, and set him on the ground. Hiccup pointed him in the direction of his cage, but the Terror didn't move. Instead, the little dragon hooked around Hiccup's prosthetic and refused to let go.

The Terror was torn from Hiccup's leg, and then kicked. The little dragon slid across the stone floor of the arena, slamming into the wall near his cage. It fluttered its wings weakly; one of them was obviously shattered. It howled in pain, and the Vikings chuckled.

Hiccup snapped. He was hungry, tired, and beaten, and he was sick of Drago and his animalistic trolls. Hiccup attacked the nearest viking. It was probably a rather amusing spectacle, he thought afterwards, considering that it took the viking a few seconds to even realize Hiccup was there.

After that, he remembered that he became a punching bag. The two Vikings got him up against a wall, and it began. His hair was yanked, and his legs pulled out from beneath him. A knee in his sternum, and all the air left Hiccup in an instant. A brutal kick to his ribs had him curling up into a ball.

Words, from some distant memory came back to him.

* * *

><p>Hiccup sat on his bed, crying. Stoick said nothing, only waited for his son to tell him what had happened. He cleaned the scraped knee with a tenderness that few saw.

Finally, through the gasps of air, the five year-old poured out his heart. "Snotlout... he pushed me on the stairs... and..." A moment of Hiccup trying to stop hyperventilating. "...he called me a 'useless fishbone'!"

The boy's cries started anew.

"Did it hurt?" Stoick asked.

Hiccup looked up, surprised by his question. His tears stopped. He nodded. "Uh-huh."

"Sometimes, Hiccup, we get hurt. Sometimes there's pain. Sometimes it hurts on the outside." He put a hand on Hiccup's little knee. "But sometimes there's pain in here." Stoick put a finger to Hiccup's heart.

Hiccup put a hand on Stoick's heart, silent for a moment. "You have a hurt, don't you, Daddy? When Mommy died?"

Stoick froze. For a moment, he couldn't speak, and when he did, his voice was choked, and tears came to his eyes.

"Yes, Hiccup.

_"But I'm a chief. And a chief can't let the things that hurt get to

him. He has to stay strong for his people." Stoick looked at his son._

"A chief feels no pain."

"A chief feels no pain." Hiccup repeated.

* * *

><p>Another few punches were thrown before Hiccup collapsed again. His nose had been hit, and once the first few tears had escaped, they wouldn't stop coming. He yelped as one of the vikings kicked him in the ribs. Hiccup was sure he had broken one.<p>

A chief feels no pain.

Another kick, in the same spot.

A chief feels no pain.

They dragged him to his feet, so they could punch him again.

A chief feels no pain.

A fist was pulled back, ready to strike.

A chief feels no-

* * *

><p>Astrid had expected many responses from Camicazi. This was not one of them.<p>

The Bog-Burglars came as fast as they could, as soon as they got the letter delivered by the Terror. They had hooked up a few boats to some of their strongest dragons, and gotten to the isle of Berk in a full day. Thank Thor for the dragons; it would have taken them almost three days without them.

As soon as they had landed on Berk, Astrid had expected them to be their usual, loud, boisterous selves. But they were near silent. Their Chief Bertha allowed Camicazi to lead them all into the Mead Hall.

When Astrid came out to greet them, she had expected Camicazi to make a witty comment, something that would smart and burn. But when Astrid stood before the smaller blonde, there was silence.

"I'll do my best," was all she said.

Astrid nodded. The bog-Burglars continued to file in among the Hooligans. Astrid recognized a few of them from peace treaty signings. They were taller and had filled out, the childishness of four years ago had left them, but the mischievous glint in their eyes was still there.

Camicazi was almost as tall as Astrid now, and, now that she had gotten that wild mane of hair under control, was quite a beautiful thing to look at. Not that anyone would ever tell her so. One could never be quite sure how Camicazi would respond to such a statement.

She was also much too pleased with herself already.

Astrid stared around at the two tribes standing before her. A few years ago, she would have never believed that she would be leading the two tribes into some kind of mission to save her boyfriend- her boyfriend, the same boy who had been the least promising Viking in the Archipelago, who had become chief.

And yet, here she was. She called for silence, even though the atmosphere was hushed already. "Thank you. As you already know, our chief, Hiccup Horrendous Haddock the Third has been kidnapped by Drago Bludvist..."

* * *

><p>A man called Humongously Hotshot had been tasked with returning Hiccup to his cell. Rogue was off assisting Drago, and the job had fallen to him.<p>

Hiccup was a mess. He was clutching at his ribs; every step hurt, and he now knew something had cracked. His lip had split, and his nose was bleeding. It didn't seem to be broken. He probably had a black eye and bruises in many other places. Including his back, which hadn't yet healed from when Rogue had took the whip to it.

Humongous couldn't help but feel a little bad for the poor kid. He must have done something pretty awful to get Drago so mad at him. He looked pitiful, bleeding, bruised, and sniffing, trying to stop his nose from bleeding, as well as the tears that refused to stop sliding down his cheeks. He appeared to be in a lot of pain. All of these elements made Humongous a little uncomfortable.

Not really knowing what to do, he tried to comfort the boy. "It's okay. I'm sure you'll feel much better in the morning."

Considering the kicks that he had gotten in the head, Hiccup doubted it.

"I'm sorry. Is there anything I can do?" Humongous asked.

Hiccup looked up at him. "My dragon is here. He's locked up, alone, and scared. I haven't seen him in a while, and I'm so worried." He sniffled dramatically.

This ploy had worked on a few Vikings in the past, when Hiccup had absolutely nothing left to use. As Humongous' steps faltered, Hiccup prayed for this to work. This was his only chance out for now. He couldn't run around by himself, not while he was in this much pain, and he knew that even if he got away, he'd never find Toothless in the vast fortress without being seen. And he'd never leave without the Night Fury.

Humongous couldn't say no to those green eyes. The poor thing had been through so much already- and no one had said he had to take the boy straight back to his cell.

"Please, he's the only friend I've got." Hiccup added, begging Odin to let this work.

"Now, don't you worry yourself. We'll go see your dragon- very

quickly, mind you. And then back to your cell." Humongous gave Hiccup a stern look that might have been taken seriously if there was actually any threat behind it. "And no funny business."

Hiccup sighed in relief. He was getting out of here.

* * *

><p>Oh, I enjoyed that. That was fun. So fun.
****The next chapter was so much fun as well. If you liked this one, you might like that one too.**

**A note on Humongous: if you've read the books, than you know all about how he has a soft spot for Hiccup. Plus, if he had married Valhallarama, Hiccup would have been his son. They've got this really adorable relationship in the books, so he was the perfect guy for the job in this chapter. **

**And that's all. Happy New Year, everyone. **

14. I Need You

**So. Yup. School's back- how exciting and fun.
>

Thank you all for your sweet and amazing reviews! Every single one of them means the world to me!

* * *

><p>Chapter 14: I Need You

* * *

><p>Hiccup stared. The door wasn't even locked with a lock, just three heavy metal bars laid across it. They obviously thought very little of Hiccup and the Night Fury that they were holding in that cell.<p>

Standing by the door, all was silent, but Hiccup could hear the familiar breathing of a Night Fury. His Night Fury.

Humongous gave Hiccup a sorrowful look. "I'm afraid I can't let you in. But at least-" He turned around, which gave Hiccup about three split seconds to knock him on the head with his prosthetic. Humongously Hotshot crumpled to the ground. Hiccup reattached his prosthetic, and removed the metal bars, trying to be as quiet as possible. They were heavier than he had thought, and the struggle to lift them and place them silently on the ground was a hard one.

Especially when you had badly bruised ribs.

By the end, Hiccup was nearly doubled over in pain, his arms wrapped tightly around his chest. But he opened the door and slid inside.

Toothless was curled up on the floor. His saddle had been taken off, but it was lying in the corner. The dragon wasn't restrained at all,

no chains, no ropes, just the walls of this cell. Hiccup knelt by his dragon. "Toothless?"

The dragon didn't stir. Hiccup ran his hand over the smooth black scales. "Toothless. Bud. Wake up, we've gotta get out of here."

Nothing. Hiccup got a bit more desperate now. "Please." He shook the dragon as best he could, but Toothless slept on. A sleep-coma, they had said. He didn't even know what that was, but there had to be a way to wake him up. "Toothless." The horror of the situation started arranging itself in his mind, despite his attempts to try and think rationally. _Toothless not waking up. Toothless stuck in this sleep-coma. Stuck. Forever._

"Toothless! Wake up! I need you!" Hiccup pulled on one of the Night Fury's ears, desperate. "Please! Please wake up!" He shouts grew in volume, his voice cracking as panic consumed him.

The next thing he knew he was crying again, wrapping his arms around his dragon's head, pulling Toothless close. Toothless was the only thing he had left, and Toothless had left him. "Oh, please, Toothless, please wake up."

He never got a response, only the soft breathing of the Night Fury. Hiccup laid his head on top of Toothless', and cried, begging him to wake up.

"Please. I need you."

* * *

><p>Hiccup barely heard the shouts of the guards once they found Humongous' limp form. He didn't listen when they shouted at him to come out.<p>

He just continued pleading with the dragon. He felt arms grab him, yanking him up into the air, away from Toothless. He lashed out at them, but his eyes were only on the sleeping form of his dragon.

He screamed, and the cries fell on deaf ears.

Later, he could vaguely remember Rogue coming into his cell, and slapping him around a bit. He could guess that he hadn't responded, and the man had left.

Because now he was alone.

He looked around at the dark cell. He drew his knees up to his chest, grimacing at the pain.

He now knew that he was completely alone. There was no one anymore, not even Toothless.

He was alone.

Alone.

It was strange. After having someone at your side for six years, all but physically attached to them, alone felt strange. Once, he

remembered, he had preferred alone. But now alone hurt. Alone felt like the whole world crashing down on him. Alone felt like losing a loved one.

Probably because he had.

He was alone.

* * *

><p>Somewhere, deep in the darkness, something in Toothless stirred. Something in the back of his mind, something still awake.<p>

Pain, it screamed. _Broken, pain, wake up._

That part heard the cries. That part felt Hiccup's agony, felt his panic, his desperation. Toothless needed to wake up.

But the sleep-coma was suppressing all, even his need to save his human. For a moment, it almost succeeded.

And then: _"Please. I need you."_

The words had echoed for a moment, without meaning. And then it clicked.

Toothless' mind sprung to life. He could feel Hiccup's arms around him; hear his cries. He heard the shouts of the guards, and desperately tried to rouse himself. Hiccup needed him, and he needed to wake up.

A claw twitched.

Hiccup was jerked away from him.

An ear quivered.

"NO! Toothless! Let go of me! TOOTHLESS!"

One green eye slowly started to open-

It slid shut, as the sleep-coma slowly overcame him, dragging him back down into the black depths. Toothless struggled, but the darkness was all-consuming.

But the sleep-coma didn't have quite the hold on him that it did before.

It couldn't block out the cries of Hiccup, even though they grew fainter and fainter. Some part of Toothless could hear them, but all he could do was wait; wait for the darkness to loosen its grip.

* * *

><p>The Bog Burglars and the Hooligans set off in the direction of Drago Bludvist. They didn't have much of a heading- the tracker dragon's guessed route from the first rescue attempt was their only clue. They had brought plenty of boats- if Drago used the Alpha to control their dragons again; they needed a way of escape.<p>

Astrid and Camicazi stood shoulder to shoulder, neither one speaking or feeling the need to. It wasn't a tense silence, but the silence of two people who were shouldering the same grief.

"Uh, Astrid?" Fishlegs tapped her on her shoulder. "Snotlout's... uh... trying to explain the whole Alpha situation to Bertha."

Astrid could picture that scenario in her head. Not a good one. "I'll be right there."

She glanced at Camicazi, who met her eyes. The two young women exchanged a silent conversation. _I can come, as well._

No, I've got it.

I'll be here, then. Much to Astrid's surprise, the Bog-Burglar gave Astrid's arm a squeeze, but it was so fast and quick Astrid thought she might have imagined it.

Astrid brushed it all away, spinning on her heel to go deal with Bertha and Snotlout. Fishlegs shook his wall. He'd seen the moment pass between the two. Usually after being in the other's presence for this amount of time, they would already be at blows.

He'd never understand girls.

* * *

><p>Rogue visited Hiccup in the morning. The Viking Chief didn't even look up, choosing to stare at the wall instead.<p>

"Feeling shy today, sunshine?" Rogue clucked his tongue. Hiccup felt a surge of anger and forced himself to continue to focus on the wall. He wouldn't give Rogue what he wanted- a reaction.

"After your little _escapade _with your dragon, Drago decided he'd been going too easy on you. So today we're going to step up our game." He waited a moment, but Hiccup didn't seem to feel like giving him a response.

"He wants you in the arena."

* * *

><p>Hiccup hadn't wanted to leave, but Rogue had pretty much dragged him there. Hiccup's mind was on Toothless the whole trip, desperately trying to remember anything the Book of Dragons might have said on sleep-comas. His mind was at a blank.<p>

He hadn't even released they were there, or that he was being spoken to until Drago struck him on the side of the head. It was a light blow in comparison to some of the others he had received over the past few days, but it still hurt.

Hiccup blinked, staring around._ The arena. Right._

Toothless. In a sleep-coma. The thought came back so quickly; like a knife had been stabbed into his heart, and as soon as he had forgotten it was there, it was twisted violently.

"...may have a concussion."

Drago simply grunted, turning away from Rogue. He didn't care what Hiccup had, as long as he was alive and able to do what Drago told him to. "Bring it out." Drago called, and one of the doors on the side of the arena was pulled open.

Nothing burst out- no explosions, no whirl of a dragon on a rampage. Hiccup squinted into the darkness of the cage, wondering if there was even anything in there.

Slowly, a rather small creature waddled forwards, into the light. Hiccup felt his heart stop, and he ran a hand through his hair, trying to calm down, trying to convince himself that this was just some crazy nightmare, this couldn't be happening, everything was fine.

He wasn't at the mercy of a large group of insane men.

Toothless wasn't sleeping in some dark corner, unable to wake up.

Hiccup didn't understand why he was here, why Drago needed him.

But as the little creature stumbled over towards them, tripping over its own too-big feet, the fact that _this is reality _was crashing down on Hiccup. Drago needed him for this creature, to help him learn how to get it to trust him.

Because Drago had a baby dragon.

A baby Bewilderbeast.

* * *

><p>This chapter was really hard to write. I don't know why but it was harder than normal.
Eh, whateves.
>Sorry for the stupid chapter title- wait, all my chapter titles are stupid. But this one just seems extra cheesy.

All your reviews, favs, and follows warm my heart- I appreciate all of you for supporting this... story. You all are amazing, and I love you.

15. Of Fathers and Waiting

**I'm sorry about this chapter. Not just for the wait, though I am sorry that it's almost been a whole month since I was able to write. It's also on the shorter side- it may be the shortest of all. A lot of this chapter is catching up and setting up for the next scene, which I'm hoping will be the one that I've been waiting this whole story to write.

>Let's just say that it will be my favorite part aside from one part closer to the end. Gosh I'm so excited.
**

Your reviews absolutely blew me away! I love every one of them, and keep them close to my heart. I love you all so much!

To Guest: Ah, but _are they_ **glimpses into the future? Or are they to the past? Maybe a little bit of both? I'm glad you like them though, it's my favorite thing to write. :D**

* * *

><p>Chapter 15: Of Fathers and Waiting

* * *

><p>I was still waiting.

I was flipping through the pages again, to distract myself from the waiting. I started at the end, during happier times, and watched as the pages went by, and my handwriting got messier and the words more desperate.

Before I could stop myself, I had found the first page. Written onto a piece of leather, and with a stub of charcoal:

I'm lost.

I'm lost.

The mark on my chest is burning. It has not healed, and it feels as if it's brand new.

And it doesn't just hurt there. Something deeper has been taken from me, something much more valuable than flesh.

It's burning, but it's burning because it's lost.

I'm lost.

From the moment that the white iron touched my skin, I lost my freedom. All of it.

I may have been working for Drago, but I was still free. But now, all I can feel is that scar and that gaping hole where my freedom was. There is no escape for me now. Forever, I am marked and everyone will know that I serve a purpose to Drago. There was no medicine or mystical cure for the freedom I've lost.

What would my father say?

Farther down the page was another entry, written in a clearer, smoother handwriting that no longer looked like my own.

I'm scared for my sanity now. Sometimes I have strange thoughts, ones that scare me, and sometimes there are no thoughts at all, just this blank, empty space. It's only grown worse, and now that

The entry ended there, and the last word had left a trail of charcoal across the leather, as if it had been torn from my hands. The first actual paper was on the next page, and it was written in the font that I knew was mine.

I'm lost. So lost.

I know now that there is no way to earn my freedom back, I will

forev-

I shut the book then.

My hand flew to the scar, and even beneath layers of cloth, I could feel it burning as bright and painful as ever. I had learned to ignore it, by distracting myself, and on a good day, I could almost forget that I had it. For a few fleeting moments, I was free again. And then it would burn, and I'd look down, and reality would crash back down on me.

Even after all this time, I was still lost.

I couldn't look at Drago now, so I looked at other things, the deck of the ship, the ocean, the island that was steadily approaching-

The waiting was over.

I scrambled to my feet, throwing myself at the rail, trying to get a better look at the little island in the distance.

The waiting was over.

Traitor, _my mind whispered._

But the waiting_, I whispered back, my voice swept away by the wind.
_The waiting is over.

* * *

><p>The worst so far had been the dunkings.<p>

They had forced his head into a bucket and held him there for minutes, each second passing so slowly they could have been hours. He had swallowed more water than he cared to think about, and when they pulled him up, hurling up all the water he had breathed in hurt more than anything, since his bruised ribs certainly weren't getting any better.

He had still refused, of course, to do anything with Drago's little Bewilderbeast, but his resolve was wavering.

And Drago was getting frustrated. He had picked up small things from Hiccup, like how not to startle the little dragon. It helped that it was a baby, and seemed to like the Dragon Master, oblivious to the horrors Drago had inflicted on dragons before him.

The Bewilderbeast had approached Hiccup every time the Viking had stepped into the same room with it, fascinated with Hiccup's scent that was more Night Fury than human. Hiccup would stand absolutely still, praying that it would go away, because he didn't have the heart to make it leave. And any acknowledgment of the little dragon could help Drago. And that was the last thing Hiccup wanted.

And every time that Hiccup did nothing, he could be sure that Drago had something awful planned in retaliation.

* * *

><p>Hiccup was back in his cell, still wet, still feeling sick on that liquid they had pushed him into.<p>

He ran a hand over his face, trying to think of anything except Toothless. Just thinking about the dragon trapped in a slumber for Odin knows how long was enough to send tears to his eyes.

What he would have done just to see those green eyes open, those wings spread wide. He wished that the Night Fury was back on Berk-safe, and happy. He pictured the dragon among the clouds, a stark contrast to the blue and whites of the sky. Toothless would dive around, his tongue sticking out, then he'd glance back at Hiccup over his shoulder when he heard his rider laughing at his expression. Then, Toothl-

And there he was again, thinking about Toothless.

When they dunked him again, only a few hours later for the same crime, he was still thinking about Toothless. He was still thinking about Toothless when they took the whip to his back again; still thinking about Toothless when he was beaten again and again.

And when he wasn't thinking about Toothless; when the pain was too great, he thought of his father. His father's strength, and the way he had pushed through the pain, whether a physical hurt or the gaping wound of losing his wife. Because a chief feels no pain.

And yet, sitting in his cell, bruised and bleeding, all he could feel was pain.

"A chief feels no pain." He whispered to himself.

Toothless locked away, those green eyes shut in an eternal slumber.

And yet Dad... Dad was...

"A chief feels no pain."

He tried to convince himself. He told himself that he felt no pain.

But he couldn't believe his own lies.

"A chief..." His voice broke, and he closed his eyes, wishing some small part of him could believe that.

* * *

><p>So the whole dunking idea was obviously taken straight from the books. In the books, it was his whole body in ice water, but I just figured the concept was close enough. What better way than the cannon way? :D

**Internet cookies to those of you who have reviewed, favorited, and followed this hunk of text. Because you guys make my life. **

****Short chapter. But it is important. This one underwent several layers of heavy editing, because I just couldn't get it right. Ugh. Still not overly happy with it, but ah well.****

****Due to certain plot ideas, my favorite chapter is now at least three chapters away. (cries) The next one is still going to be angsty, though. ****

****Explanation for the chapter title:****

"Don't make promises you can't keep."****

"But those are the best kind."****

*** * ***

><p>Chapter 16: The Best Kind

*** * ***

><p>"I've told you already, no_."

Out of the corner of his vision, he could see Drago giving a signal. Hiccup braced himself, shutting his eyes.

Blunt nails scraped against his scalp, catching his hair and yanking him to his feet. When he tried to push the hand clawing at his head, his arm was grabbed roughly. One moment it was free, the next it was pushed painfully behind his back and twisted upwards. The pain instantly flowed through his arm, and Hiccup tried to break free.

His arm was tugged just an inch higher, and with a horrifying popping noise, slid out of socket. Hiccup yelped, struggling in the Viking's grip. "Oh gods," he gasped. "Oh gods."

It was twisted again, and it was all he could do to keep from screaming- Another twist-

*** * ***

><p>Hiccup woke up with a scream. He sat straight up, slamming his head into the wall on his way.<p>

He groaned, rubbing the place that he was sure was going to bruise. He regretted the action immediately, as his right arm was swollen and aching badly from when it had been pulled from place.

He hadn't been able to move it for quite some time, and it was extremely painful, especially when everyone kept grabbing it. On purpose, of course.

Much to Hiccup's relief, when Drago had finally given up and sent him back to his prison, Rogue had put it back into place with as much gentleness as a certain Berserk chief would have bashing open an enemy's head. Which was to say that popping it out of joint was only half as painful as Rogue forcing it back in.

Hiccup stretched out his legs, rubbing his tender stump. He hardly dared to take his prosthetic off, because he wouldn't put it past

them to take it away again. He took it off now, not honestly caring anymore. He just wished everything would just stop hurting. It didn't matter how he sat or laid, something was always hurting.

The chief sighed, leaning against the wall and letting his head hit the stone slightly harder than he meant to. Just another thing to add to a long list of-

He bolted upright, his eyes open as wide as they would go, even though he could see little in the dimly lit cell. He waited once again, waiting for the sound to return, praying to everyone in Asgard that he hadn't just imagined it. He also sent up a few blasphemous pleas to the Romans- he could use all the help he could get.

Seconds passed.

His heart sunk. He was imagining things.

Then it came again.

The most beautiful sound he had ever heard, and all in the same moment, the most horrifying. It was a sound that always accompanied his darkest dreams and nightmares. It was the sound of something that had both saved and destroyed him.

The sound of a Night Fury about to fire.

Hiccup grabbed his prosthetic, throwing himself at the door of his cell, almost giddy with elation.

He wasn't alone anymore.

Never again, he promised himself. _Never again._

* * *

><p>Only a moment ago, he had been out with Fishlegs and Meatlug, helping them set up some pointless course for the new members of the academy. But Toothless didn't mind, seeing as if he did this, it'd be one less thing Hiccup had to do.<p>

And one less thing meant more time flying.

Toothless didn't remember much after that. He remembered having a nice nap, and now here he was, stretching his wings in the afternoon sunlight. He thought about that flight that he and Hiccup could take later, and turned over, and hit stone.

The Night Fury opened his eyes.

He was not, as he had previously thought, napping in the sunshine. It was quite the opposite in fact, he found himself lying in the darkness, surrounded by three walls of stone, and one of wood and metal.

He stretched. This was certainly a change. He sniffed around. Humans, strange humans, one that he had smelled once before, back wh-

Voices swirled back, along with the memory of his dreams; a smothering darkness that stretched on for

eternity.

"Toothless?"

He had not settled down for a nap. He could remember the whistle; a small pinch when the dart had hit him.

"Toothless. Bud."

He could remember the darkness. He could remember Hiccup's pleas, remember failing to protect what mattered most.

_"Toothless! Wake up! I need you!" _

Toothless shook his head, and the voices vanished, only to come back with more intensity.

_"NO! Toothless! Let go of me! TOOTHLESS!" _

Horror filled the dragon, and the urgency to reach his human took over. But not because of the cries of his riders from- when: yesterday, a week, months, years ago? No, something else had woke him, and it was sending him into a new panic.

Hiccup had screamed again.

Toothless wouldn't fail him again.

Never again, he promised himself. _Never again._

* * *

><p>A Night Fury on a rampage is not something many people want to see. Since typically, the last thing any witnesses see is said Night Fury on a rampage.<p>

Toothless could only see red. He didn't need to really see anyway, he could find his way to his human just fine with only hearing.

"Toothless!"

Hiccup was pressed as close as he could be to the door. _Toothless is coming, Toothless is coming, Toothless is coming._ Everything was going to be okay, as long as Toothless was there.

He called out again, trembling as he listened to his dragon storm up the halls in bounds, seeing blue flash in the darkness. He listened to the shouts of Drago's men who were in Toothless' path.

A screech, this one closer than the rest, told Hiccup he needed to move. He skittered away from the door, crouching in the darkness. The scream grew in volume.

Hiccup's world exploded in _blue_ and _rubble_ and _noise_. His ears were ringing, and he had all kinds of scrapes where bits of the door had flew.

Hiccup felt hot breath on his forehead, and velvet scales brushed his cheek.

_I'm here. _

He flung himself at the dragon before him, and embraced as much of Toothless as he could reach. There was no time to rejoice, though; even Toothless had gathered so much with his limited knowledge of their current situation.

They were down the halls in a second, Hiccup clinging to Toothless and directing him where to go. Shouts and alarms were being raised all over the fort, and Toothless raised fire in his throat as a few men clamored towards them, maces and axes raised.

It was chaos, and yet the two were at peace. They were together, and they wouldn't leave the other's side again.

Never again, they promised themselves. _Never again._

* * *

><p>"Don't make promises you can't keep."_

**"But those are the best kind."**

Cookies to those who know the quote!

I'm giggling so dang hard, as this is setting up everything. You all are going to hate me by the end of this, because I finished all my planning, and it's insane and tragic and I LOVE it.

Looking over all my notes, yes, you all are seriously going to hate me and want to destroy me.

I deserve it, though.

Thank you to all who review, favorite, or follow this story! I jump out of my chair every single time I get an email that one of you has supported this story! THANK YOU!

17. Go On Dreaming

**This chapter was an absolute pain to write. And I'm so stinking mad at it, because it turned out to be longer than I meant for it to be, so now my favorite chapter has been pushed back. So the chapter after next will be TOTAL DESTRUCTION AND BEAUTY AND TEARS.

Hopefully.**

**GOSH I WAS SO CLOSE WHY**

* * *

><p>Chapter 17: Go On Dreaming

* * *

><p>They were almost free.<p>

Just a few more turns, and then they'd be free. Hiccup leapt off

Toothless as soon as they reached where Drago had been keeping the dragon.

They didn't part all the way- Hiccup kept one hand on those warm scales, as if to reassure himself that Toothless was really there. He ducked into the stone room, glancing around for Toothless' saddle and tail fin.

Well, wasn't that just perfect. He groaned. Of course, they would have moved Toothless from this cell once Hiccup knew where he was.

"Toothless, can you find your way back?"

Soon they were off again, Hiccup's ears still ringing from Toothless' shrieks as they charged any of Drago's men in the halls. With every moment that passed, more and more were appearing, flooding towards them, blocking the way.

Toothless snarled, releasing another blast, but now the fire was getting weaker. He turned, and fled the other way.

"Okay, okay. We'll find another way around." Hiccup said out loud, reassuring himself. He laughed, and it was desperate and threatened to crack into sobs.

He didn't pay attention to where Toothless was going, just put his head on his dragon's neck and felt him. He was moving, alive, furious. He wasn't sleeping in some dark corner for eternity. He could do anything, survive anything, as long as Toothless was there.

Toothless, seeming to read Hiccup's thoughts, gave him a reassuring croon. Toothless darted around another corner, and snarled viciously when he was met with the sight of more screaming Vikings. He ran back the way they had come, then took another turn, then another-

The arena.

Hiccup scanned the walls. _Toothless was a _Night Fury, he reminded himself. They'd get out of this, just like they'd gotten out of every tough situation before- together.

There were only dragon cages lining the stone walls, and a few exits, which were barred, or full of angry Vikings, too afraid to come closer, because of the blue welling up in Toothless' throat.

Hiccup looked up. The ceiling. The ceiling was made of wood. Or, at least, it appeared that way. "Toothless."

The fire died in the dragon's throat, but instantly rekindled when Toothless understood. Hiccup slid off the Night Fury's back, and Toothless tilted his head, glaring up at the ceiling he was about to destroy-

He screeched in pain and surprise when an arrow embedded itself in his wing, piercing all the way through the black webs. The flame released, weak and not even reaching the ceiling.

Hiccup barely had time to register that Toothless was injured before

he was swept up into a cocoon of black wings. He was hidden from view, protected by a wall of scales and dragon and Toothless.

Time seemed to slow down from there. Neither could hear the shouts of the Vikings surrounding them, everything outside that black bubble seemed to cease to exist.

"Hey, bud." Hiccup whispered, before he finally gave way to tears, sagging against the dragon with relief.

Toothless crooned, trying to comfort his human. One sniff, and Toothless could smell blood. Dried blood. He nosed around Hiccup's hair gently, looking for injury. A cut near his eyebrow, a scrape on his cheek, a mess of welts all down his back... And that was only the beginning. Toothless started licking.

Hiccup didn't protest, not only did the slimy saliva sooth the various gashes scattered all across his skin, it was proof that Toothless was here, and as long as Toothless was here, he really didn't care what the Night Fury wanted to do to him.

The dragon licked at him long after his Hiccup was drenched in spit, reinstating his Alpha Night Fury: jaws, paws, and claws OFF scent on Hiccup. But he was shocked at how incredibly good Hiccup was at managing to get himself hurt. There didn't seem to be an inch of him that wasn't cut or bruised.

What worried Toothless was how old some of them were. He couldn't have been out that long. Only a few days, he convinced himself, trying to swallow the fear that eternal darkness had placed in him.

"Oh, Toothless. Oh, gods..." Hiccup hugged the dragon's neck as tightly as he could. His legs gave out and he slumped down, his back against Toothless' wings. The Night Fury ducked his head down, snorting into Hiccup's face, touching his nose to the chief's forehead.

They could have stayed there forever, wrapped in a scaly embrace, the whole world outside forgotten. They could have stayed there, just gone on dreaming, just the two of them. But, out of all the voices trying to penetrate the barrier of dragon, one succeeded.

"Hiccup!" Drago bellowed, and Hiccup grabbed at one of Toothless' paws, bringing it close. Toothless watched, curiously and slightly confused. Hiccup traced the scales on it, unable to ignore that voice.

"Come out, now, or that dragon will be dead!"

Hiccup huffed in disbelief. As if. Drago and all his men were nothing in the face of Toothless. But he still hugged the paw closer, and Toothless shifted a bit to correct his balance.

The Night Fury glanced over his blockade of wings to blast whoever was upsetting Hiccup. He met the crazed eyes of Drago Bludvist. Toothless' eyes narrowed. He didn't know exactly what was going on, but if Drago was involved, it couldn't be good.

Maybe Hiccup didn't hold grudges, but the Night Fury did. And Drago

Bludvist was about to pay for every scratch. And for every nightmare. And for pretty much anything Toothless wanted him to pay for. Blue rose up in his throat.

"Have you heard of the blue oleander?"

Hiccup's arms constricted around Toothless' leg, and the dragon ducked his head once again, worried. He hummed, trying to reassure him that it would be alright, he, Toothless, the Night Fury, could handle this.

Hiccup didn't seem to believe him, because he was still scared stiff. Hiccup was begging just to wake up, and find himself at home, in bed, about to meet up with Astrid before their first class, Dad downstairs in the kitchen ruining breakfast-

He didn't want to hear what Drago was going to say next.

But Drago continued, and Hiccup could hear every word. "That demon of yours has an arrow coated with blue oleander poison in its wing."

Hiccup had suspected as much, but the words still had the desired effect on him. He could already smell the unforgettable sickeningly-sweet stench of the flower. He glanced at the arrow embedded in Toothless' wing, just out of arm's reach from where he was sitting. Not that pulling it out would do any good. Now that it had entered the bloodstream, Toothless was as good as dead.

Hiccup wasn't sure how long it would take, but it would certainly be faster than Toothless just breathing it in.

"I have the antidote. Scauldron venom. You get that dragon under control, and I'll let you have it."

Hiccup leaned against his dragon's wings. "Oh, bud." He sighed. "They're going to use you against me."

Toothless snorted. No, they were getting out of here. Now.

He allowed the fire to come back up. He knew it was weaker now, but hopefully he could get enough to-

"Toothless, wait." Hiccup placed a hand on his nose, and for the third time, Toothless let his flames die. "They've poisoned you, bud."

Hiccup got a puff of hot air in the face in disbelief, then a lick to the cheek of reassurance.

"No, I'm serious." Hiccup slowly stood, gesturing to the arrow in Toothless' wing. The Night Fury sniffed it experimentally, inhaling the blue oleander's smell. He glanced down at his human, whose face was a mask of worry.

They'd be fine, Toothless was sure. He could make it a few hours. He tried to communicate this with Hiccup, but Drago's voice was penetrating their safe-haven again.

"I'm giving you ten seconds, before they shoot again."

Hiccup stared desperately at his dragon. "Trust me." He whispered.
"Trust me, Toothless."

Toothless was saying the same thing to his human, nuzzling his cheek.
Trust me, Hiccup.

Much to Toothless' distress, the chief pushed his way out of their cocoon. At least four dozen of Drago's men were circling them, all with crossbows trained on Toothless.

Drago grinned, making the scars on his face twist crookedly. Hiccup put a hand on Toothless' cheek, leading him forwards towards the Dragon Master.

Hiccup's hand was the only thing keeping Drago from being blasted to bits by a furious Night Fury.

"Alright. You're welcome." Hiccup held out his hand, one eye on Drago and the other on Toothless.

"Teach me to train the Bewilderbeast."

"That wasn't part of the deal." Hiccup's eyes were hard. "And unless you want a Night Fury on a killing spree until I get _that_-" he nodded to the vial of Scauldron venom, "-in my hands, you might want to just let me have it."

Drago laughed, a sound that rang through the entire arena. It sent chills up Hiccup's spine, and Hiccup felt the urge to draw closer to Toothless. But he needed that antidote.

Finally, Drago put it into his hands. Hiccup popped it open, smelling it. It was Scauldron venom alright. But there was something else, some other smell underneath the fishy Scauldron. His gaze went back to Drago. "What's in there?"

"You're a clever boy. Can't have a Night Fury roaming around, roasting my men. Especially not an Alpha Night Fury."

Right. Of course. Hiccup's hands started shaking. He stepped back, allowing Toothless to curl protectively around him. He glanced at the dragon in despair, taking a shaky breath.

Drago was going to make him put his own dragon back to sleep.

* * *

><p>Using blue oleander as a poison was a plot point I stole from my re-write of "How to Train Your Human." (not posted yet). Just thought I'd share, because why not.

**My outline for this part was... interesting. It involved the Terror from a few chapters back dying, but after a few failed attempts, I found out this way flowed best, and also because Caylee practically begged me not to. So Caylee, I really do love you, despite THIS STORY in general. **

**All of you others who reviewed- I cried. I literally cried, you all are so sweet, and so epically amazing. I humbly offer you some

homemade yak-nog and some of Val's meatballs.**

Also thanks to favoriters and followers, you all are the best, too!

On another note: My planning for this story is 98.763957% done, I only have a minor details to tweak. Don't let that fool you into thinking this story is almost over. It's not. We still have quite the journey- **_3 pages worth of point-10 solid paragraph of outline**_**to get through. This chapter hardly made a chink in that.**

18. Sweetest Downfall

I am really sorry for the wait on this. I had 12 essays between this update and the last. Yeah.

This was soooo hard to write, at least the first part. But I felt like I needed to catch up with Berk, so. Yup. Please don't hate me for what I've done.

IMPORTANT: JOURNAL PERSON IS IMPORTANT

LASTLY: BELOVED CHAPTER IS NEXT I AM SCREAMING MUCH EXCITE (you guys are going to kill me so bad next chapter haha)

**Sorry it's late for me, I worked way too long on this. **

* * *

><p>Chapter 18: Sweetest Downfall

* * *

><p>There was mostly silence. The only sound throughout the whole fleet of ships was the occasional dragon squawk or idle chatter of battle-ready Vikings. Astrid gripped her axe tighter. There were almost there. She could just feel it.<p>

Two months.

Two months, and they were closer than they had ever been before.

They had been so close, but then the ice had set in. Thick and white, stretching out to the horizon and beyond.

Astrid had been devastated, as they were forced to retreat back to Berk and wait for it to thaw. They were just lucky they had the dragons- the ships were able to be flown back to Berk. Which meant they wouldn't starve or slowly freeze to death.

It also meant that until the ice broke up or melted, Hiccup was on his own.

Astrid had been beside herself when they had been forced to turn around.

But now she was filled with a mind-numbing fear, slow and deep in her soul. It was chewing at her from the inside out, excruciatingly slow,

like a knife was ever so carefully being twisted deeper into her chest.

Even though the air was thin and sharp, Astrid felt as if she was being suffocated. She shifted the axe in her hand.

_He was going to be alright, _she told herself.

And if he wasn't, gods help Drago Bludvist when Astrid found him.

* * *

><p>At first, he had been confused.

_And then the confusion turned to betrayal when the words clicked.

—

_I had forced myself to meet his eyes. I owed him that, I owed him—

His eyes had been green. And they had been angry.

_Even though I would beg for forgiveness later, I still remember my surprise when the anger melted. Melted into... concern? Sympathy?

—

_I had followed his gaze to my shoulder, where claws had gouged deep into it, leaving behind stripes of red, red that dripped down my arm, staining, tainting—

But then he was angry again, though there was still worry in his tone. Maybe forgiveness would come. Not that I deserved it. Not that I could receive it.

Now I stood, heading out to sea again, my head spinning, and anger rushing like blood through me.

I had killed him.

Not with a sword, not with a knife, not quick and painlessly, like I should have.

_No, I had ripped his heart out, and then left him, screeching in agony, in the hands of an enemy far greater than I. _

_But I was weak. I was a coward. _

"Forgive me," I whispered. It was to him, though he'd never hear it. "Forgive me."

_But somewhere, deep down, I knew why my reasons for not killing him were somewhat selfless. Someone would come for him. Someone would come for him, and free him from hell. _

No one would come for me.

I had taken the easy way out, because I was killing myself. I was bleeding out, slowly, but the numbness seeping into my mind was stopping any pain. Numbing the horror of the situation.

I yanked out the journal. I could forget. I could forget everything.

_I held my life in my hands. _

"Forgive me," I whispered. "Forgive me."

_And then I threw it. _

For a moment, I felt relief.

For a moment, I felt nothing.

And then I forgot.

* * *

><p>They were in Toothless' wings again, away from the eyes of Drago and his men.<p>

Toothless was confused.

They were so close to escape, Hiccup should be excited, a light back in his eyes, some fiendishly clever plan on the tip of his tongue. But his human's eyes were not full of light, they were full of tears, and he couldn't even seem to speak.

It took several calls to get Hiccup's full attention. The Night Fury was a little concerned now, as he knew the human was injured. Maybe he was in more pain than he let on, or he hit his head again.

And when he did get Hiccup's attention, the human cut off the dragon's new expedition to find out what was keeping him from continuing their escape.

"Bud...?"

Hiccup put a hand on Toothless' nose, meaning to push him off; but just not having the heart to do so. Toothless crooned, glancing upwards, his muscles twitching in eagerness to get going.

Let's go, Hiccup.

The idiot fate had stuck him to wasn't listening. "Bud, I.. uh, you're not going to like this." He whispered.

_Let's go. _

"Toothless, they... we-" Hiccup shifted the vial over to his other hand, wiping his sweaty palm on his pants. He gave up trying to tell the Night Fury. He gingerly touched the arrow still embedded in the dragon's wing.

"They poisoned it."

It took a moment to sink in.

Toothless understood now. Hiccup must have made some deal with those Vikings- amazing that they were clever enough to bargain like that. But this was nothing to get upset over. It was almost offensive that

Hiccup thought that he, the Night Fury, could not still get them out of this.

"And I have the Scauldron venom."

Hiccup held it out to him, popping open the lid, and Toothless sniffed at it. Yes, Scauldron venom. But something else, too. He could almost taste it, a thick, bittersweet syrup on his tongue.

As he breathed it in, he could feel the tiniest tendrils of dark unfurl in his mind, little by little making his vision hazy.

And now he truly understood.

Horror.

He couldn't go back. Not back to the darkness, the great abyss of oblivion, where he couldn't think, couldn't feel, couldn't move.

Couldn't hear Hiccup screaming for him.

"Toothless. Toothless." Hiccup's voice was able to pull him from his panicked thoughts. The dragon reeled back, jerking away from Hiccup, and almost causing the vial to upset. Despite his clumsy fingers, Hiccup managed to catch it, keeping the precious liquid within from spilling.

He replaced the cap, setting it down. "It's okay, bud, it's okay." He wrapped his arms around Toothless' neck.

It was not okay.

Hiccup rubbed his scales while Toothless tried to stop shaking. The boy was trying to keep his own panic down- few things upset his dragon this badly.

"I'm sorry bud, but I... I won't help Drago; I've helped him enough already."

Toothless keened, the mournful wail filling the walls of the arena. He couldn't go back to that darkness. He couldn't go back to the endless void. He couldn't leave Hiccup, not again. He wasn't going to abandon him to Drago again.

But Hiccup couldn't let Toothless die.

"They've got us good, bud." Hiccup whispered, his hands roaming over the black scales, comforting himself more than comforting Toothless.

Toothless was starting to feel the effects of the blue oleander, it was travelling fast through his bloodstream, spreading to every cell. He felt like he was glued to the ground, and a dull pounding started in his head.

Hiccup watched as Toothless' eyes shifted in and out of focus. He gently pulled his best friend's head closer to his own, touching foreheads. "I'm so sorry, bud. But I can't let you die."

He uncapped the bottle, slowly easing the precious liquid drop by drop into Toothless' mouth.

Forgive me, bud, forgive me.

* * *

><p>Hiccup pulled away, his mouth full with a bitter taste. He turned to Drago, who was watching with amazement.<p>

"You truly are the Dragon Master."

The chief didn't answer, didn't react. His eyes were still lingering over the Night Fury. The majestic black dragon was hardly moving, he looked dead save for the rare deep breath.

Hiccup wasn't sure when they dragged him out, or how he had gotten back to his familiar room, or why exactly he had an array of new bruises coating his face.

All he could think of was Toothless.

Toothless.

Drago had got them. Both of them.

Hiccup cried.

* * *

><p>Aww. Cute. But we haven't broken yet. Don't worry. You'll know when we do, as soon as you see the chapter title for said chapter. It's not next chapter, but it will be REALLY SOON.

**Our journalling friend's section... psh I can't tell you anything except that I love writing things that foreshadowing/backshadowing(?) at the same time. **

Then we have fun, and then we have this super emotional climax which is probably better than breaking.

BUT NEXT CHAPTER IS MY BABY THAT YOU ALL WILL HATE/LOVE.

Thank you to my beautiful readers, who pretty much make my life every time you review/fav/follow or just read it. Thank you so much.

19. Forgive Me, Bud, Forgive Me

YES FINALLY THIS IS MY CHAPTER

**This chapter is insane long, almost 2x longer than the rest. When I wrote it out, it was 5 pages. So when I typed it... it got long.
**

YOU ALL WILL HATE ME BY THE END I SWEAR (on RagnarÅk((haha you'll get that at the end))).

* * *

><p>Chapter 19: Forgive Me, Bud, Forgive Me

* * *

><p>Hiccup hadn't wanted to leave. Not that he really cared; not in the end. They could do whatever they wanted to him, and he wouldn't care. Toothless was gone, and he was alone again.<p>

Toothless...

Hiccup rubbed his eyes as they dragged him down the hall. They were red and puffy, and he wasn't sure when he had stopped crying. Or if he even had. He couldn't tell anymore.

The Viking who had a firm grip on his arm was dragging him towards the arena. Gods, no, he didn't want to do this. They could just save everyone the trouble and leave him in his cell until he died, or Toothless woke up. Whichever came first.

And then he heard a distant roar.

Hiccup faltered in his step, a gasp escaping him, his heart leaping up into his throat.

Another shriek split the air.

He knew. He just knew. For just a few moments, relief was all he could feel, flowing through him. But then reality set in. The only reason Toothless was awake was because Drago had woke him.

And there could be no good reason for that.

Surely he wasn't... No, they wouldn't have touched his dragon, not if Hiccup wasn't there. Toothless would only be used as a tool to get Hiccup's cooperation. They had no reason to harm him- not yet.

He tried to swallow his fear as they walked. But the increasing frequency and volume of the Night Fury roars wasn't helping. Hiccup kept his head down, running through every reason he could think of for Toothless' cries. None of them were very encouraging.

And then the smooth, worn stone of the arena was beneath his feet. He was pulled to a halt, and for a moment, Hiccup just stared at the floor. He could just pretend that Toothless was locked away somewhere, safe from Drago and his knives and whips and-

Toothless' low cry pierced straight through his thoughts, and Hiccup had to look.

The sight that met him brought tears to his eyes, even though he had already cried himself out. The sight that met him haunted him every time closed his eyes.

Funny how just a few moments ago, he would have done anything to see Toothless awake and alive. Now he wanted nothing more for Toothless to be anywhere- anywhere but before his eyes, in any other state besides this one.

Toothless was chained, in the center of the arena by his wings. The chains were not wrapped around the wings, no, that was far too humane for Drago's taste. Instead, ragged holes had been cut out, and the chains and ropes threaded through them. They were raw and bleeding as Toothless thrashed in pain. He had been muzzled, with a metal device that looked as if it had been designed to cause as much pain as possible.

A sob managed to escape Hiccup's throat, and Toothless whirled towards him, eyes flashing when he saw his human. He doubled his efforts to break free, the chains ripping and tearing through his wings. For this, Toothless was rewarded with a mace to the head that would have broken open Hiccup's skull. Toothless just looked a little dazed, thankfully, but that didn't stop Hiccup's anger.

"Don't touch him!" He cried, making a wild lunge for his dragon. He was grabbed and yanked back before he could even get close. The Viking holding onto him tightened his grip painfully, but the chief couldn't even feel it. He struggled, though he knew it was useless.

_Hang on, Toothless, hang on. _

Hiccup forced himself to calm down, hoping Toothless would follow his lead. He didn't want the dragon to injure himself further. Toothless met his gaze, eyes wide and fearful.

Then the anger was back. It was rushing to his head, and pounding like a heartbeat in his ears. Drago's smile made him wish he had a sword in his hand: he had hurt Toothless, and he had probably loved every minute of it. He couldn't remember ever feeling this almost-murderous rage before, and he didn't enjoy it.

"Your Night Fury is as stubborn as you." Drago rumbled, handing his dragon skin cape to one of his men as he approached Hiccup.

"Don't touch him." Hiccup growled.

Drago just grinned and shrugged. "Help train my new Alpha."

Hiccup said nothing. He couldn't, not when he saw the look that passed between Drago and Rogue. The anger was gone, replaced with a dread that settled deep in his chest. A slow-spreading panic that latched onto him, making his hands shake and his heart race.

No... no. Hiccup couldn't believe this was happening, even though he knew it had been coming, but it just felt surreal. Rogue was holding a sharp, flat blade, and from the look on Toothless' face when he saw it, the tool had been used before. The boy's mouth was dry, and he tried to swallow, but couldn't.

This was bad, but he couldn't say yes, so he said nothing. Drago repeated himself, and it was all Hiccup could do to shake his head.

Forgive me, bud, forgive me.

Drago looked slightly surprised, and signaled Rogue. As much as Hiccup wanted to look away, he locked eyes with his dragon. _Hang on,

bud, hang on._

Toothless' pupils were narrowed with fear, but as he and Hiccup made contact before his scales were brutally shredded, he put on a brave face. He gave Hiccup a gummy smile around his metal muzzle, reassuring his human that he was Toothless, the Night Fury, and he could do anything.

The dragon just hoped it was true.

The smile vanished as Rogue drove the metal into his skin. Toothless kept staring at his stronghold, Hiccup, whimpering in pain.

Drago asked him again, but Hiccup didn't answer. He had eyes only for Toothless. Toothless met his gaze, telling him it was okay, he could withstand. Hiccup wanted to cry, to embrace his dragon who had unshaken faith in him. The Night Fury had little to no idea what was going on, but he trusted Hiccup's judgment.

_Oh, forgive me, bud, forgive me... _

"I won't help you, Drago." The chief tried to spit the words out, but instead his voice just trembled.

Hiccup didn't know how much time passed while he watched Rogue destroy his best friend, his brother, his Toothless. It wouldn't be much longer before Hiccup would have to decide just how selfish he was. Giving into Drago would be murdering all his hopes and dreams, everything he had created, fought for, sacrificed for. He'd lose everything.

But Toothless was his everything. And every one of Toothless' cries put a crack in his resolve. He couldn't close his eyes, couldn't look away, only watch.

His legs had given out beneath him, and he had been hoisted up by his arms, which had long since gone numb. Every time that knife bit through his dragon's skin, Hiccup felt it as clearly as if it was his own.

After an eternity, Drago told Rogue to stop, and something in Hiccup's chest loosed.

Drago addressed him again, and any relief Hiccup had vanished. "I'm going to ask you again." The boy's heart raced. He knew now that Drago wasn't going to stop until he gave in, or Toothless died. He pushed the thought away, instantly. "Teach me to control the Alpha."

Toothless crooned reassurance, and Hiccup glared at Drago. "No."

The madman turned away, his silence radiating his fury. Everything was quiet. Then Drago picked up an ax, and tossed it to Rogue.

Toothless trembled, and Hiccup almost broke free from the vice-like grip around his arms when Drago grabbed Toothless' tail. "Must be some story; how your beast lost his tail." The Dragon Master ran his fingers over scales and old scars, and, thanks to Rogue, quite a few new ones. "And yet, you got him back into the sky again. You're a

clever boy."

Drago's hand met Toothless' remaining tail fin. "I'm sure if something..." He let the words hang dangerously- "...happened to the other one, you'd still be able to fix him, wouldn't you?" Hiccup was paralyzed with fear, with dread.

No, don't... Hiccup begged to anyone who was listening. _Please, no. Please, make this stop._ But either no one heard him, or no one cared.

"But something else..." Drago moved away, keeping his eyes fixed on Hiccup's shaking form. But then his fingers were trailing along Toothless' wing. Hiccup's breath caught, as Drago's intentions suddenly became sharp and clear.

"...something more crucial, I doubt even you could replace." By the horror on the boy's face, Drago knew he was right.

Drago nodded to Rogue, and Hiccup finally got his voice to work.

"No! No, please, no!" Hiccup cried, struggling and kicking, trying to get between his dragon and the ax.

Drago broke into a grin, marching over to him. "Changing your mind, dragon boy?"

"I'll do it, just don't hurt Toothless." Hiccup's legs gave out again, and he hung limply from Drago's men's arms.

"Swear it." Drago growled, his face inches from Hiccup's. "Swear it on Ragnar  k." Hiccup nodded, desperate. Drago snarled at his men, and they dropped Hiccup on the floor.

A knife was pressed into his hand. Hiccup dragged it across his hand without hesitation. He hardly felt it, and was almost surprised to see the blood running down his hand. It seemed a small price to pay for Toothless who had endured so much.

"I swear." He choked out.

A swear on Ragnar  k was not one that could easily be broken. In breaking it, one would live out the end of the world to the last moment, dying a thousand gruesome deaths before peace would come. The method of death depended on what bard was weaving the tale, but all of versions were bad. Hiccup had never been overly enthusiastic about the gods, but he wasn't about to mess with something like Ragnar  k.

The blood ran down his hand, dripping onto the stone floor, and mixing with the red of Toothless.

Drago laughed, the sound making Hiccup's stomach churn. "Smart boy."

Hiccup glanced at his dragon, whose eyes were still fixed on the ax in Rogue's hands, as if he couldn't believe the fate he had almost been subjected to. The knife was pulled from his hands, an action he hardly acknowledged. "Alright, you got what you wanted..." Hiccup

began, pausing as Drago did something strange.

Drago signaled Rogue to raise the ax.

"Wait, what are you doing?!" Hiccup scrambled upwards, panic giving him new energy. The Vikings who had been holding onto him grabbed onto him again, keeping him back.

Rogue continued to walk towards Toothless.

"No! I swore!" Hiccup protested, thrashing.

"Yes, you did." Drago agreed. "Think of this as payback for the men I lost the other day."

Hiccup forgot how to breathe. Ragged gasps escaped, words attached to each. He babbled mindlessly, begging Drago not to do this, he would do anything, just not to do this _please_.

The ax rose. Hiccup wasn't sure who was screaming- he or Toothless.

The ax fell. It fell, ripping through scales. Then it ripped through skin, then bit into muscle. It severed sinew, and crashed into bone.

Forgive me, bud, forgive me.

* * *

><p>In Hiccup HHIII's words: "It's okay... it's okay."

**PLEASE DON'T KILL ME I PROMISE TOOTHLESS IS OKAY.
(mostly).**

Note: The swear on RagnarÅk was 100% MADE UP. It does NOT EXIST. I made it up for this chapter. NOTHING about it is true.

Just so you all know, and I don't feel guilty if you start believing it's some legit thing. Because it's not.

20. Dim

I'm really sorry for the long wait. I'm currently out of the country, so internet can be iffy. Sadly, this chapter was complete weeks ago, it just took me a really long time to actually type it up. (and edit it, my gosh). So again, I'm sorry.

* * *

><p>Chapter 20: Dim

* * *

><p>He awoke to darkness.<p>

At first, he thought he hadn't woken up at all, that he was still trapped in that nightmarish void of black, but then his eyes began to

adjust. A small glimmer here, and as he shifted his eyes to look at it, another warm light flickered somewhere else. He watched it, waiting for his vision to come back.

Soon, he could see that the light was winking off of some kind of metal. The metal was draped all over the place, like some kind of net-

Chains.

The chains were stretched all over him, wound through his wings and scraping against his scales as he breathed.

And then he became aware of the pain. At first it was just a buzz of discomfort, but then it became a dull throb, aching.

Then it burned, and Toothless wondered if this was what fire felt like to the scale-less creatures. He moaned, shifting to try and alleviate it. The chains rubbed something wrong and only made it worse.

Something moved near his neck. What was that? It had been propped up against him, but now it was shifting back. "Hey, bud."

* * *

><p>"Hey, bud." Hiccup said. He cleared his throat, his voice was still thick with sleep. He sat up, sliding his fingers over Toothless' scales. He found a bit of hardened blood in one scale that he had missed. He scraped it off with a fingernail. Toothless watched him, his eyes weary. They both probably looked like they had been trampled by a herd of Hotburples. Or something.<p>

"You really had me worried there." Hiccup pressed himself back against Toothless, petting his scales absent-mindedly. Worried didn't even cut it. He had thought every breath might have been the dragons last. He had seen how much blood the Night Fury had lost. "How are you feeling?"

Toothless shut his eyes again. It hurt. It hurt really bad in his right wing. Like it had been ripped clean off. The pain kept intensifying in that one area. Nothing had hurt like this since he had lost his tail fin. His tail. A horrifying thought filled his mind. He yanked his head out of Hiccup's hands.

"No, bud, wait!"

Toothless spun around, his eyes narrowed at his right wing.

It was wrapped in blood-soaked cloth, the blood still fresh and bright red. The wing was still there, but someone had obviously tried to sever it clean off. They had only gotten it about a fourth of the way in, but that didn't stop the bone from breaking or the blood from gushing out.

His blood.

He screeched. Before he could stop it, gas gathered up in his throat in a horrifying rush.

"No, bud, no!" Hiccup waved his hands in front of the dragon, and Toothless swallowed it, but his panic didn't fade any.

"Just calm down. I need you to calm down. You're going to hurt yourself."

Toothless stood there for a moment, looking between Hiccup and his damaged wing. Hiccup bit his lip. Toothless finally let out something between a cry and a roar, flopping back down to the floor in defeat. Hiccup sunk down next to him, wrapping his arms around the dragon. "I'm so sorry bud." Hiccup pressed his cheek against the Night Fury's smooth scales. "You're going to be okay, Toothless. I'm going to take care of you."

Toothless moaned, pushing his head further into Hiccup's arms. "I know it's bad, bud, but I'm going to fix this." He couldn't fix this one, and they both knew it.

They sat in silence, and Hiccup moved back to his earlier position. He was curled up right behind Toothless' neck, where he could keep a hand near his nose. That way he could make sure his dragon's breathing was steady.

He was also curled up right where he could hear Toothless' heart beat.

Toothless was alive.

Every time he could feel a hot breath on his palm, or the heartbeat against his own, it was a reminder that Toothless was alive.

He was alive. Hiccup was never more grateful for the constant reminders.

As Toothless' breathing slowed and evened out, Hiccup let his mind wander.

For so many years Toothless had been his rock. Hiccup had always been convinced that the great Night Fury was invincible. Right up until now.

Now, his dragon was lying on the stone, wrapped in chains, bleeding out more blood than Hiccup probably had in his whole body. It was wrong. It was so wrong.

Toothless had always been so strong. But now the tables had turned. Hiccup would be Toothless' rock now. He would stay strong and take care of him. He would be there as long as Toothless needed him to. And even then, he wouldn't leave him.

Hiccup didn't know how long he stayed there with Toothless. Hiccup laid awake, waiting for the Night Fury to wake up.

Drago must have taken some pity on both of them, as Hiccup's period of time with his dragon was uninterrupted since Rogue had been hacking off dragon limbs. But Hiccup knew it wouldn't be long before they were separated.

He must have dozed off, because he woke up to someone fiddling with the lock on the door. One of Drago's men, and not one that he

recognized. Not that he tried to remember what all of them looked like.

"Drago wants to see you now." He hissed, opening the door just a crack.

Hiccup tried to hide his grin. The man was obviously terrified of Toothless, whispering so he couldn't be heard. Even chained, injured and asleep, the Night Fury was still a deadly threat.

Out of the corner of his eye, Hiccup watched the man's eyes boggle at the sight of Hiccup stroking the dragon's scales. "I'll be back soon, okay bud?" He whispered.

And then he left, only tripping over half the chain because of the dim light on the way out.

* * *

><p>Okay, next one is already half-way written, so I have that going for me. ;u;
>Thank you for all the reviews, favs, and follows! YOU GUYS ROCK! *throws dragon-nip cookies at you*

Last thing: the baby Bewilderbeast needs a name! He's so cute, but I still don't have a name for him! So feel free to PM me or something with suggestions! Thanks!

21. Firsts

**I have pretty much no excuse. All I can say is that I'm sorry. So I'm really sorry.

>I guess I can say I was having some troubles with technology, but I've got something new set up that I'm pretty comfortable with. Just bear with me.
I'm trying my best right now, but I can promise you that I will see this story through to the bitter end.

>...to those of you who already know how it ends, I'm sorry I just said that.
Plus I can't stop at least until I get to the emotional climax! And at the rate I'm going... that might be about 15 chapters from now? This story was supposed to be way shorter.

>Anyways, I'm very sorry, but thank you all for waiting so patiently!

* * *

><p>Chapter 21: Firsts**

* * *

><p>With every step he took, guilt rose in his throat like bile. Every second he was growing closer and closer to betraying his people. And yet all he felt was relief.<p>

Relief that Toothless was okay- alive. Injured, but alive.

He tried to justify it, no one was getting hurt right now. He wasn't being hurt, Toothless wasn't being hurt, and Berk wasn't getting hurt. Yet.

And, he was stopping the baby Bewilderbeast from getting hurt. His agreement to help Drago meant that he was probably saving the dragon's life.

Hiccup had only seen the Bewilderbeast twice- the first, only days after its hatching. The second time was only a hazy memory: he didn't remember much, so maybe he had just dreamed it.

Maybe he had just dreamed everything and would wake up back on Berk to his father's loud snoring and Toothless' loud jumping on the roof.

But he doubted it.

Just a few months ago, it had been Toothless desperately trying to wake him up. How things had changed, Hiccup begging his Night Fury to wake, or even move. Just a little bit.

He felt much better about leaving his dragon now that he had awoken. At least he was sure that Toothless wouldn't die while he was away. Hopefully.

Hiccup was so caught in worry about Toothless he didn't realize he had arrived at the arena until he heard Drago's bellow. "Bring out the Alpha."

The man who had escorted Hiccup down the hall jumped into action, leaving his post at the Viking's side and running towards where the Bewilderbeast was caged in. He grunted as he pulled a huge lever, and the heavy metal door slowly rose.

Hiccup took a deep breath, bracing himself to face off with an angry and confused hatchling. He waited.

Nothing.

Drago's scowl grew. "I told you to bring out the Alpha!"

The man stood as close as he dared at the edge of the doorway, and peered into the darkness. "It's, uh, not coming out." He glanced back and Drago and instantly started squirming under the Dragon Master's intense gaze.

"Bring out the Alpha!" Drago roared.

The man took a step into the cage, and looked back at Drago; torn between his fear of Drago's rage and his fear of the Bewilderbeast. He took another step, but his fear of the dragon won out and he backed away, shaking his head.

Drago's gaze fell to Hiccup now. "Get it, Dragon Master."

The Viking said nothing, just walked towards the cage, trying not to think about everything wrong with his current situation. And trying not to think about Toothless.

The cage was dark, and Hiccup squinted as he entered, trying to spot the form of a rather large-ish baby dragon. He shivered- it was far too cold in here to be healthy for a hatchling. Then again, he remembered, it was an ice-spitter, so perhaps it needed the cold. Or

maybe it was making it so cold? Hiccup didn't have much experience with Bewilderbeasts, after all.

An old feeling of excitement washed over him- the same one he got everytime he was around a new species. Adrenaline mixed in with an almost suicidal kind of wonder and joy just to learn more about the creatures he loved so much. He wasn't sure if he should feel guilty about that, since he was only learning about the little ice-spitter for all the wrong reasons.

Lost in thought and guilt and anticipation, he tripped, falling flat on his face. Before he had even hit the ground, he knew what he had tripped over. It was something hard, and cold. But it was very much alive.

The dragon let out an unhappy yelp when Hiccup's foot slammed into it's side, and continued to make pained whines as Hiccup picked himself up. His bruised shoulder screamed in agony, but he barely took notice of it, instead reaching out for the Bewilderbeast.

His hand brushed thin, leathery scales before the dragon jerked away, startled. The anxious cries grew in volume. Hiccup knew dragons well enough to know what a distress call sounded like, and this one was certainly making one.

"It's okay, it's okay." Hiccup knelt down by the Bewilderbeast. It was pretty big, easily the size of a half-grown Gronkle. He reached out a hand, wondering if it was too young to understand the display of trust.

It didn't move, and his fingers met scales again, but this time, they stayed under his hand. It was the first time he had actually touched the dragon, even though he had seen it once- or maybe twice. The scales felt soft, which he wasn't sure was normal or not. Most dragon hatchling's scales were hard at least by the time they were a month old. Hiccup had no idea how long this dragon had been out of its shell, and he certainly had no idea of time since he had arrived.

However, he was sure the dragon's scales should be hard under his hand.

The cries of distressed started up again, and Hiccup spoke to the dragon, trying to calm it down.

Astrid had always said he had a magic touch. There was something different about him, and the dragons could just tell. Even hatchlings. Even hatchlings that had never even met another dragon before.

"It's all okay. You're safe, and it's all going to be okay." Hiccup shifted around towards the Bewilderbeast's head. He could just make out the soft glow of the ice-spitter's eyes. "How about we get out of this dark cage, huh?" The Viking rubbed the dragon's nose and then slowly rose to his feet.

It took quite a bit of coaxing and a lot of encouragement, but eventually lead the dragon into the light.

Drago stared at him for a moment, and shook his head, a smile

twisting over his scarred face. "You truly are the Master of Dragons."

"And I guess that's where we start lesson one," Hiccup said, crossing the arena and then dragging a large basket of fish to where the Bewilderbeast was sniffing around. "There is no 'Master of Dragons'." He held out a fish to Drago, wishing that there was another way, any way, not to do this. "It's just you, and a dragon. No titles, no demands. You're both just equals."

* * *

><p>Sorry for the boring chapter.

Thanks to every single person who favs, follows, reviews, and just reads! You have no idea how much it means- even though I couldn't get any notifications recently, when I was able to access them I was overwhelmed. You all rock!

There's only one thing I ask of you- the baby Bewilderbeast desperately needs a name! You can PM me or email me or something with a suggestion, if you want!

Thanks, guys!

22. Safe in my Arms

So this chapter is for *_the-fanaddict _on tumblr.**

>I love you, you beautiful person like you don't understand I wanted to read some good Hicctooth crap and then saw your post and I don't deserve to be up there with something like Hitchups but you put me on that list and I was so shocked I fell off my chair and then crawled under a table and cried for a while because I was so happy and you just

>So this is for CHAPTER IS FOR YOU _the-fanaddict._**

>It was supposed to be a bunch of other stuff but now it's mostly Hicctooth for you you're welcome you beautiful person how can I repay you for the absolutely joy you have bestowed upon me I don't even know

>So I throw you this chapter.

Also, on a less enthusiastic note, I'm so sorry for the absolutely insane length of time that went between this and the last chapter. My life has been all over the place. BUT I WILL FINISH THIS BABY. I will. I swear, it's not going to be trashed. It will be completed, even if it takes me forever.

>However, my absence was not completely in vain, there's a lot of other tidbits I've been working on, one of which I have very high hopes that will probably take eternity. BUT I WILL DO IT FOR HICCUP AND TOOTHLESS.

I hope that the sheer amount of angsty Hicctooth in this chapter will make you forgive me, or at least hate me a little less.

* * *

><p>Chapter 22: Safe in my Arms

* * *

><p>"Hey bud." Hiccup said softly as he knelt in front of Toothless' sleeping form. He rubbed at the soft scales on his dragon's nose, and Toothless shifted into wakefulness. "How you feeling?"<p>

He didn't get an answer, but Toothless opened his eyes. There was nothing in them, no relief to see Hiccup, just exhaustion and something that made Hiccup's flesh crawl. Something void and empty. Hiccup glanced away quickly, trying to convince himself that the Night Fury was just out of it.

As he took care of the Night Fury, making sure that nothing was infected and cleaning him up as best he could, Hiccup talked. He talked about anything, everything, just trying to distract himself from the mess he had found himself in. And to distract himself from the seemingly empty shell beside him.

"I've got a lot of stuff to do before the wedding, you know. I probably should get Astrid a kitten- I was so preoccupied with getting Berk back to normal that I totally forgot. I could ask that one Barbarian girl for one. She wouldn't mind, I'm sure.

"You won't mind either, right? You liked Fiddlesticks, and this one will be like him, justâ€| smaller. Another nap buddy." Hiccup smiled, though it was strained and he felt something catch in his throat. "Maybe give her two, so Stormfly has a nap buddy, too?"

Toothless didn't move. Didn't blink. It was like he was still in the coma. Like he wasâ€|

Like he was dead.

The thought slipped through Hiccup's careful filter so suddenly that he physically recoiled, jerking his hands from the Night Fury's scales. Panic shot through the Viking's blood so quickly that his exhaustion after working with Drago and the baby Bewilderbeast left him completely.

"Toothless," he breathed, sharply. "_Toothless_."

There. There he was. His dragon came back to him in a rush, green eyes contracting then dilating again, coming into focus, snapping to Hiccup. A claw scraped at the ground, Toothless pushing himself closer to his human as a gummy smile spread across his face.

Oh. Oh gods.

Hiccup remembered how to breath, and lavished affection on the dragon, taking comfort in each other's presence. As Toothless' nose pressed into his shoulder, Hiccup wondered if he was okay with this. He wondered if he was okay with the fact that the nervous knot in his stomach disappeared at this moment, okay with staying right here as long as he got to keep Toothless right here, at this moment.

He wondered if he could live like this.

If his dragon could sustain him forever. Just the two of them.

But as Hiccup looked into those green eyes, he knew that some of the light had gone out. And staying here would certainly make those lights go out completely.

It would kill Toothless. And he wouldn't be killing Toothless with a sword, not with a knife, not quick and painlessly. No, it would be ripping his heart out.

And Hiccup couldn't let Toothless die.

Hiccup didn't know how long they just laid there, comforting, protecting, clinging to each other, but eventually Toothless drifted off to sleep again. Hiccup sighed, stroking those scales for a few more moments before getting to his knees.

"Alright, let's see how bad this looksâ€¦" He lifted the bandages over Toothless' wing, and desperately tried to hold himself together.

I did this.

No, he decided, he couldn't live like this. Not with Toothless like this. Not with the cold stone walls around them, with only a few torches for light.

Not with the guilt that threatened to consume him.

Toothless had wondered if Hiccup could possibly forgive him for killing Stoick. Hiccup wondered if he could forgive himself for letting Toothless die.

He stared at the gaping wound.

I did this.

_I did this. _

I did this.

I did thisâ€¦|

* * *

><p>The Bewilderbeast was eating out of Drago's hands.<p>

It was a little bundle of love, and as much as Hiccup hated the circumstances, he already loved the tiny, to-be-Alpha. It was just so innocent that Hiccup couldn't help himself. For a few moments, he could almost forget that he was helping _Drago_, and imagine that he was back teaching a class with the very little kids.

The baby was doing much better- eating a healthy amount of fish and was back at what Hiccup hoped was a healthy weight for a Bewilderbeast. Hiccup could only hope that the charcoal colored scales were normal- at first, he had thought the baby dragon was just really, really dirty. Well, it was dirty. It was practically caked in soot from rolling around on the arena floor.

The baby had already grown quite a bit, and Hiccup was pretty sure this was only the beginning. He wondered if Drago had somewhere to

put it once it grew too big to fit in here.

Unlike certain others who had sought out Hiccup in some not-so-friendly ways to teach them about dragons, Drago actually listened. Hiccup was surprised when Drago had asked questions, but other than some stiffness and hesitance, had approached the Bewilderbeast the way Hiccup had told him too. It was obvious that Drago wasn't sure if Hiccup was playing with him or not until Hiccup had proved to him how trusting the baby was with open hands and open posture.

Hiccup tried not to dwell too much on the fact that he wasn't hating this as much as he should, because then it made the guilt rise up in his throat again.

He also tried not to think about Toothless. He felt horrible for it, but every time he thought of Toothless laying in that cell, bleeding, crying, alone, Hiccup's knees would weaken.

No, for now, he pushed the guilt into the farthest corner of his mind and gave the baby a pat.

"His tusks probably will grow in laterâ€¦ maybe short wing stageâ€¦" Hiccup mused, mostly to himself, but Drago nodded, like he had asked about it.

"And when can he become my Alpha?"

The idea of this little thing becoming Drago's weapon of choice made Hiccup's stomach flop. He swallowed. "I don't know."

"You don't know?" Drago echoed, in a mix of surprise and annoyance.

"I'm pretty new to the whole Alpha thing- it's not like I've ever met a baby one, let alone studied one!" The baby Bewilderbeast sneezed, leaving a coating of frost on Hiccup and Drago's hands. "Nice."

Drago grunted, and stood to his feet, shaking the ice off. "When do you think he'll be ready?"

Hiccup pushed the return guilt farther away, hardly able to hold back a smile as the Bewilderbeast nuzzled him with a sooty nose. "Just a little longer. Just a little more time."

* * *

><p>He remembered repeating those words when he returned to Toothless, taking the Night Fury's head in his arms, listening to the sound of his breathing. "Just a little longer, bud. Just hang in there. Just a little more time."<p>

Toothless shifted restlessly in his sleep, and Hiccup wished he could do something, do anything. All he could do was hold him, make sure that Toothless was safe. Safe, like Hiccup could protect him from the world, just like Toothless had always protected him. Safe, like Hiccup was the one wrapping Toothless in his wings to block out the world.

"Just a little longerâ€¦" Hiccup begged. "Just stay with me a little longer, bud."

* * *

><p>First off, about the kitten thing- Vikings proposed with kittens. I wish I had known that back a few chapters, but oh well. I want to be proposed to with a kitten. Please. Forget rings of gold, I want a kitten.

>Also, the Barbarian mentioned is from the last HtTYD book- Barbara, whose who tribe pretty much adores cats.

>Fiddlesticks is Hiccup's cat in the books, for any of you who were wondering.

GOSH I LOVE YOU PEOPLE I'M SO SORRY IT TOOK SO LONG PLEASE FORGIVE ME I HOPE THIS CHAPTER MADE IT UP TO YOU BECAUSE IT DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE DYING IN IT

>*cough*asidefromToothless*cough*
>(he's not going to die I promise)

**But anyway, I love you and thank you for your support, you wonderful, sweet amazing people. **

23. The Small Hours

**I'm very happy with this one. I wasn't expecting something to happen, but it works perfectly, since it fills in a future plot hole I hadn't quite filled. Thank you, whatever gave me that random idea. **

Also, I put together a playlist for this **story. It's what I use to write it by, so I figured I'd just go ahead and publish it, in case if any of you cared. The link is in my profile. (Also the playlist has a bigger version of the cover for this story) ((just thought I'd say)) (((okay I'm done advertising now))).**

* * *

><p>Chapter 23: The Small Hours

* * *

><p>How many sketchbooks were up here? Twenty, fifty, a hundred? All of their pages crumpled, waterlogged, slightly scorched.<p>

Astrid fingered one for a long time before opening it. Sketches of Toothless, charcoal drawings of any object, dragon or person that caught Hiccup's fancy danced on the pages. It felt wrong. Wrong that there was so much Hiccup here, and yet she knew he was gone. Astrid traced her fingers over the lines, as if she could somehow find him here, in his soft handwriting and careful doodles.

She didn't know how long she stood there, just flipping through Hiccup's memories and thoughts and passions. It was well into the small hours of the morning by now, but she couldn't tear herself away from him.

She sat down onto his bed, leaning back until her head touched his pillow. _Oh, gods,_ it still smelled like him. She took a few deep breaths into it, imagining that he was here, about to walk upstairs, about to enter the room, about to stare at her, about to open that smart mouth and ask her _what in the name of Thor_ she was doing sniffing his pillow-

She opened her eyes so she could see him.

But he wasn't there.

Her eyes stung, and she closed her eyes again, waiting for the water in her eyes to vanish before opening them again. She was Astrid Hofferson. She did not cry.

She would not cry for Hiccup. Not now.

Hiccup did not need her tears, or her emotions.

He needed _her._

So she would not cry. Not yet.

She wouldn't cry until he was safe, back here, in this room, her arms around him.

Astrid clutched the sketchbook that was still in her hands tightly. She would find him, and bring him home, and she would be strong, because she was Astrid Hofferson.

She struggled to hold back the tears again, but eventually won the fight.

She'd be strong.

* * *

><p>The words love and hate somehow obtained the same meaning for Hiccup. They had always seemed like polar opposites, but nowâ€| Now they were the same.<p>

Soot, the baby Bewilderbeast: Hiccup hated him. Hated what this Bewilderbeast would become, what Drago would create with such an innocent soul. But Hiccup _loved _him, all in the same breath.

Toothless. Hiccup loved his time with Toothless, the precious moments snatched from the peaceful jaws of time. But he hated those moments, watching the one he loved scared, sleepless, depressed: hardly moving, hardly breathing, hardly alive. Some days Toothless didn't even wake from that blank, empty stare, and when he did-

Hiccup didn't want to think about it.

Not now.

Not now, while he got a break from both dragons and was instead caring for some of the injured ones from Drago's army.

"Hey, beautiful." Hiccup ran his hands down the spines of a Hackatoo.

She was a lovely shade of pearly green, only marred by the bloodied stump of a leg. She flinched when he got near it. "It's okay, it's okay. I'm not going to hurt you!"

Hopefully she was the last dragon maimed by Drago's traps. Hiccup had promised to show him how to gain one's trust if Drago just stopped using the traps. Drago had agreed, but Hiccup had nothing other than his word to hold him to.

After he had comforted and cleaned the Hackatoo up, Hiccup thought about going back to Toothless. There was only one dragon he hadn't gone to see yet, and while he hated the thought of any dragon being in pain, Toothless would probably be up soon, and if Hiccup wasn't there when he opened his eyes-

Hiccup knew this last dragon would be a piece of work. A Nadder, who had been screaming ever since he had come down to help out this morning. Drago had put little restrictions on him now- he knew Hiccup would not leave without his precious Night Fury. Even still, Hiccup had two guards trailing him continuously. The only relief he got was when he was with Toothless, or like now, when he was tending to sick and hurting dragons, which the guards refused to get close to.

It wasn't trust as much as it was that Drago knew Hiccup. Hiccup would give him that- Drago had figured him out.

As much as he wanted to return to Toothless, some part of him also didn't want to. There was little that hurt him more than seeing Toothless in his current state.

So he went to the Nadder's cell.

Inside, the Nadder was going berserk- spraying fire and squawking and straining against their chains. This Nadder was going to be a handful. With some effort, Hiccup opened the cell. Instantaneously, the Nadder lunged at him, screeching. "Whoa, whoa, it's okay!" He lit the lantern, and the Nadder jerked against her chains, trying to get as close to him as he could.

Hiccup's eyes widened. "_Stormfly_"

* * *

><p>Hiccup tended to Stormfly quickly, calming her down and comforting her. She didn't appear to be hurt, but she was in such a passion it had taken longer than he thought.<p>

And then he had all but fled back to Toothless. He needed to think.

This was his chance. Stormfly was his chance. Stormfly was his way out. Even if he couldn't get Stormfly to take him home, she could lead Berk to him. Lead Astrid to him. This could work.

Hiccup bit his lip, thinking hard. He'd need to think this out carefully.

The two usual guards were following him now, puzzled by his rush but not overly concerned. They were almost back to Toothless' cell when Hiccup heard it.

Hiccup hadn't dreamed in a long time, but when he did, that sound was always part of his nightmares.

The Night Fury scream.

The Viking was running now. His heart was hammering, that icy cold fear shooting down his spine no matter how many times he told himself that Toothless was just scared, he wasn't actually in danger, he was just scared-

Before he turned the last corner, Hiccup forced himself to slow to a fast walk. Toothless didn't need anymore reason to get wound up.

Hiccup took a few deep breaths, then called out to his dragon. His voice shook a little, but hopefully Toothless wouldn't notice. In the end, it didn't really seem to matter how calm Hiccup tried to make himself appear, Toothless still went into a frenzy as soon as he heard Hiccup approach.

He shot at the door a few times (this one, unlike Hiccup's old "home", was fire resistant), and Hiccup could see the blue smoke curling out from inside the room. When the Night Fury finally figured out that blasting wasn't working, he slammed his whole body against the iron door.

It shook in its hinges, but not enough to move it.

Hiccup called out to Toothless again, trying not to think about the way he was probably tearing his wings as he slammed into the door once again.

And again.

Finally he was right outside the door. "Toothless, buddy, it's me."

The Night Fury hit the door so hard Hiccup thought it might crash down on top of him along with the dragon. "Buddy, you've got to stop." He glanced at the guards hopefully, but both of them were lingering far down the hall, frozen in awe and fear of the beast trying to escape. There was no way they'd unlock the door with Toothless in this state. "As soon as you calm down, I can come in."

It was like Toothless was deaf to the words. He heard Hiccup's voice, his human's voice, and Hiccup was outside and he was inside. It was wrong. So wrong. It was dark, and maybe he wasn't trapped inside a cell but within the walls of his own mind again.

All he could hear was Hiccup's voice, and remembered the way he had let his human down the last time. He would never let that happen again.

Eventually, his strength wore off and his efforts to knock down the door got weaker and weaker. He butted his head against it a few times, wishing for it to just vanish so he and his human could be together again.

Hiccup pressed his hands against the door, feeling the vibrations as Toothless pawed at it half-heartedly. He hadn't even realized he was talking until he heard himself speaking. "It's okay, bud. It's going to be okay. I'm right here."

* * *

><p>The Viking guessed that it was in the small hours of the morning before he was finally able to lull the Night Fury into sleep.<p>

It had taken quite some time to comfort Toothless into just staying still enough for Hiccup to check his injuries and make sure the dragon hadn't hurt himself further. He was bleeding a little from opened scabs, but other than that he seemed fine. Not that they were healing as nicely as Hiccup had liked, but then again, the Viking had little medical experience, especially when it came to his dragon.

He supposed he was grateful for that, in a way.

And then, it had taken hours to get Toothless to sleep.

It was like he was terrified of shutting his eyes. Like he thought that he'd never be able to open them again. And considering what he'd gone through, Hiccup didn't really blame him.

Nothing hurt more than seeing Toothless in this state. Toothless was his protector, his companion, his everything. And he was powerless to do anything but try and comfort the dragon as best he could. The tears started to come, but Hiccup would not let them fall.

He would not cry for Toothless. Not now.

Toothless did not need his tears, or his worries. He was already too upset already.

He needed _Hiccup._

So Hiccup would not cry. Not yet.

He would not cry until Toothless was stronger, until Toothless was back to his usual self, or as close as he could be in their present situation.

So Hiccup had sat by his side, stroking his scales, trying to coax him into a healing sleep. And then, after endless hours, those green eyes closed and Hiccup dropped his hand, sighing.

He didn't know how many times he repeated this cycle in the next few weeks. Teaching Drago about Soot, caring for Toothless, caring for other dragons, calming Toothless down when he woke, then luring him back to sleep.

Hiccup did not sleep.

No, he had more important things to do.

Like plan Stormfly's escape.

Which would ultimately lead to his own escape.

* * *

><p>In case you were wondering, Stormfly was the unexpected present. I had no idea she had a role to play until she popped in, and she fixes one of my plot points later on.

24. Floating, not Flying

****Wow, this one isn't even in my outline. It just wrote itself. I think some part of me needs baby Bewilderbeasts because I keep dreaming about them.****

>It's very weird.

****But hey, not a month between updates! :D****

* * *

><p>Chapter 24: Floating, not Flying

* * *

><p>It had been a few weeks before Hiccup had figured out how to set Stormfly free.<p>

The Bewilderbeast was getting bigger, and Hiccup knew it wasn't good to keep a creature of the sea solely on land. He argued this point at length with Drago ("How will he swim if he never learns?" "If he's miserable, he won't be good for conquering anyone." "He can't live his whole life on land- it's not good for him!"), until the Dragon Master gave in.

For the first time since he had first came here, Hiccup was outside. It was a freeing thing, knowing that there was a still a world beyond his prison.

That was not the only advantage. Outside meant a way to free Stormfly, which meant Berk, which meant escape. He'd need a little more planning, but outside was getting closer. Much closer.

The sunlight was enough to bring a smile to his face for the next few days. It wasn't particularly bright, but the gray skies and distant sun reminded him of home.

Home. Berk.

Stormfly.

He kept his thoughts in the corner of his mind as they brought out Soot. Hiccup hoped to wash off some of the dirt and grime while the Bewilderbeast swam. He then turned his attention to his surroundings, searching for possible holes in defenses.

They were at a harbor, where Hiccup assumed he had been brought in from. It was larger than he expected, and from where he stood on the docks he couldn't see the end to the maze of ships. How did Drago persuade this many people to his side?

And then he remembered: with Drago it was join or die.

Or, in Hiccup's case, tortured until you gave in.

He glanced back at the fort behind him. It was so sinister, he was surprised it didn't haunt his nightmares. The wood was stained black, and Hiccup guessed it had been coated with something fire resistant. The fort was large, and it loomed high above him, and the doors that he had come out of seemed to swallow the men coming in and out of them.

What did one do with such a fort? Hiccup had to wonder. Aside from housing all Drago's men and dragons, what other things did it contain? Hiccup's curiosity was getting the best of him, and he turned his attention away.

Guards were nearly everywhere, keeping constant watch from what he could tell. There was constant activity from the ships, loading and unloading trapped dragons. He bit his lip and looked away.

Soot was being dragged out now. He was making his little bleating noises of confusion and fright, and the men dragging him had tied the ropes tightly, and it was probably chafing his dried out little scales-

Hiccup intervened. He had to. He couldn't stand to see any dragon bound or chained. It went against everything that a dragon was.

One of the warriors, whom Hiccup recognized as Humongous, regarded Hiccup coldly before dropping his rope. The Viking shrugged it off. He _had_ _knocked_ this guy out. He still felt a little bad about that.

Soot calmed down as soon as he saw Hiccup's familiar figure. "Hey, there, big guy." Hiccup bent down, giving him some comforting pets and scratches, while freeing him from the ropes. Even in the short time that Hiccup had known him, Soot had grown significantly, almost doubling in size.

The Bewilderbeast pressed his face against Hiccup's, and the Viking smiled. "You're going to love this."

Hiccup led him towards the end of the dock, Soot trotting eagerly behind like a giant puppy. And then Hiccup's fears were confirmed when the dragon just stood at the end of the wooden planks, staring at the water, then at Hiccup.

It was like watching a dragon that had never flown staring at the sky like it meant nothing more than the ground beneath their feet. Hiccup was not a dragon, but he was a creature of the sky, the sky that was more than just air to breathe but a whole other world, one without expectations or limits or anything except him and Toothless. And watching the Bewilderbeast, a creature of the sea, struggle to comprehend what the blue below him was broke Hiccup's heart.

Without another thought, Hiccup jumped into the water.

It stung. The salt sought out his cuts and scrapes and cleaned them, and while it stung, it was a good kind of hurt. Being in water felt so good. He hadn't been even remotely clean in a long time, and he probably reeked. It was harder to tread water because of his bad leg, but the metal was light enough that it didn't weigh him down too

much.

He broke the surface after a few moments, and rubbed the water out of his eyes. Soot was pacing anxiously on the dock above him, uncertain about all these new things. His existence so far had been Hiccup, Drago, his cage, and the arena. Along with a few indistinct men who never got close. This- this was all brand new.

As Hiccup encouraged Soot to join him in the water, he felt the eyes of many people on him. And more importantly, Drago's eyes. How he knew, he didn't know, but as he looked around to search for the Dragon Master, Soot made his decision.

He jumped down into the water after Hiccup with a giant splash. Hiccup was worried for a moment when the very large baby dragon seemed to panic in the water, thrashing around as he went under, but instinct took over and he swam to the surface like he had been doing it his whole life.

He came up next to Hiccup, shaking the water from his spiny head. Hiccup laughed. As best as he could, the Viking cleaned the dragon's scales. He was still a dark color for a Bewilderbeast, but at least some of him was a little less grimy.

Soot was happier than Hiccup had ever seen him. He dived under the small waves, coming up to circle Hiccup three times, then going under again. It was like watching a baby bird fly for the first time. Or like when he and Toothless had finally clicked in flight- the joy they had shared.

A sudden, stabbing ache for the sky grabbed hold of Hiccup, and he looked up, almost expecting to see Toothless there, waiting for him, saying in his draconic way: "_What are you waiting for? I want to fly!" _

But above there were only gray clouds.

* * *

><p>Hiccup played with Soot until he was shivering and his leg ached with the effort of keeping himself afloat. He grabbed onto the Bewilderbeast, who happily took his weight and continued swimming until Hiccup directed him towards one of the lower docks that they could climb onto with little trouble.<p>

It was a little more trouble than Hiccup had expected. He had to climb on Soot before he was able to haul himself onto the dock. He was pretty sure everyone watching was laughing at him, but he tried to ignore it as best he could.

Getting Soot out of the water was a far harder task. The Bewilderbeast didn't want to come out of his new home, and wasn't sure why Hiccup wanted him to leave it so soon.

"Come on, Soot, you can come back whenever you want!" Hiccup soothed, and the Bewilderbeast sank deeper into the water until Hiccup could just see his eyes, staring at him.

It took quite a bit of persuasion (lots of croons, pats, and food), but eventually he got Soot to emerge from the water. The

Bewilderbeast wandered over to Drago, seeking attention from the man.

Drago gave him none, not when all eyes followed the Bewilderbeast. So when Soot gave up on him, he trotted back over to Hiccup, who sat on the dock, exhausted and soaking wet, and trying to hide a smile.

"You're precious," Hiccup told him, grabbing one of Soot's budding tusks. "You're adorable!"

Toothless would have been very jealous.

Toothless.

He would be waking up soon.

How Hiccup knew this, he wasn't sure. But the subconscious awareness of his dragon was embedded deep in him, like a survival instinct. In some ways, it was.

He needed to get back to Toothless, but he just needed to check one more thing. He searched the walls of the fort, checking to see how heavily it was guarded. Of course, with him out for the first time today, Drago would want everyone on the highest alert. But after a few weeks or so...

The Viking stood to his feet, putting a hand on Soot's head.

"Behold!" Drago bellowed out, his voice echoing across the harbor as the roundness of it amplified it, drawing all eyes on him. He swung his staff wide, then pointed it straight at Hiccup. "Your Dragon Master."

Oh, Thor.

Hiccup met Drago's eyes, and the man flashed him a rare, satisfied smile, the kind that Toothless usually wore before pouncing on some unexpected victim and eating it.

"Behold," Drago didn't take his eyes off Hiccup, his smile growing. "My Heir."

Oh, Thor.

* * *

><p>Bleh. "Floating" is certainly how I'd describe this chapter. Not a lot to it. **This was so easy to write but reading over it again it's really... painful. Sorry guys.**

Bless you, reviewers! I LOVE YOU SO MUCH YOU BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE

25. Impossible

...Blehheh. This chapter tho. It's like a bunch of explanation and I just...

>Sorry for this one.

* * *

><p>Chapter 25: Impossible

* * *

><p>All thoughts about returning to Toothless were forgotten in a moment. Hiccup couldn't move, couldn't breathe, couldn't even think a single coherent thought.<p>

His mind was spinning, and his vision swam a little, so he leaned on Soot, desperate not to pass out or fall over or do something else equally stupid. When he regained his balance, Drago had already moved on, ordering his men with a meaning that Hiccup had missed.

He could do nothing but watch as Drago's men milled about, fulfilling whatever he wanted them to do, which looked like unloading their ships. Hiccup didn't stick around to watch. Instead, he took Soot back inside, leading him back to his usual cage, so that Drago's men didn't hurt him if they tried to put him back.

Soot was not happy about this development, and Hiccup stayed with him until he fell asleep and stopped whimpering.

And then it was time to face Toothless.

And time to face what Drago had said.

The words terrified him. He could only pray he had heard wrong, that this was some kind of dream or something.

His _Heir._

Drago's Heir.

No, that couldn't be right. This was impossible. Hiccup was the heir to Berk. Not to some Dragon Master and his army.

Hiccup's mind was playing tricks on him. He would probably wake up soon, curled up with Toothless, his back aching from lying so long in such an awkward position.

That was, at least, what he hoped would happen. He closed his eyes, and waited.

When he opened them, he was still with Soot, who was asleep, tail twitching as he dreamed.

* * *

><p>"I have no idea what I'm doing."<p>

Hiccup had taught many dragons to breathe fire. A handful of orphaned or abandoned baby dragons, a few hatchlings that exasperated Vikings had brought to him. Some had been easier to teach than others. However, he had always had Toothless by his side to help translate or demonstrate or just be there.

Now he was on his own with a dragon that didn't even know he was a dragon. It wasn't Soot's fault, really, but it made Hiccup's job that much harder when the Bewilderbeast had imprinted the way he had on Hiccup and Drago.

Imprinting on Drago. The thought made Hiccup's empty stomach churn and bile rise to his throat.

He pushed the thought away and refocused on the issue at hand. How could he teach a dragon to breathe fire (or ice, in Soot's case), when Soot didn't even know he was supposed to breathe anything significant? The Viking sighed, and Soot waddled up to him, his usual happy self.

"I don't know how to explain this in any way you might understand," Hiccup started, putting a hand on the smooth scales right before the spines that started on the top of Soot's head.

Soot did not, of course, understand, and instead purred before pulling away and bouncing around Hiccup in a let's do something/I'm excited to see you/I'm happy! kind of way. Hiccup wondered if he was still too young to spew ice; after all, he knew very little about the Alpha species. The only experience he had was limited to the Bewilderbeast in his mother's sanctuary, and Drago's first Bewilderbeast.

The first Bewilderbeast. Hiccup wrapped his arms around Soot, trying not to think about what had happened to the giant creature when it had failed Drago for the last time. He had not seen it, thank Thor, but he had been informed of what had conspired.

Soot licked his face with a cold tongue, shaking morbid thoughts from Hiccup's mind. Before the hatchling could dash away, the Viking put a hand on his head. "Alright. Fire. .er, ice." Hiccup then tried to imitate the sound of gas bubbling in the throat. While Soot wouldn't be using gas (or would he? The Viking made a note to investigate the source of Soot's ice-spewing later), hopefully he would still get the idea. Hiccup knew he was good at dragon sounds, any dragons that heard him would whirl around, staring at him. Toothless was especially unnerved by it, though he usually ended up encouraging it, in the end.

Hiccup tried this for several minutes, trying variations and even mimicking many of the sounds he heard Toothless make on a regular basis in desperation. Soot followed him around, making strange chirps and imitating Hiccup.

And then it hit him.

Soot wouldn't recognise any basic dragon language, sounds, or signals. He had hatched in complete isolation, aside from Drago. The closest thing he had to any dragon interaction was the smell of Toothless on Hiccup. Oh, gods, Soot had completely imprinted on him and Drago.

Hiccup sat down on the cold stone ground, and stared up at the ceiling. What did he do with this? He wasn't sure even a Dragon Master could raise a Bewilderbeast properly. Said Bewilderbeast was now sniffing at Hiccup's chin, licking it once or twice. "What do I do with you, huh?" Hiccup asked him.

Soot didn't answer, deciding he wanted to play. He batted at Hiccup's hand with a rather large paw. Not knowing what else to do, Hiccup humoured the Bewilderbeast and played with him.

If Soot couldn't learn how to become a dragon, then maybe his destiny as Drago's tool would never come to pass. Drago wouldn't give up easily, though.

* * *

><p>Hiccup was right. Drago kept pushing, demanding Hiccup teach the baby Bewilderbeast how to breathe his ice. Hiccup was at a loss. He had seen a dragon imprint on another animal before. He had a dragon imprint on him once, however, this dragon also had Toothless's influence to help her adjust. And she had turned out just fine.
Mostly.

Soot had nothing.

Hiccup had nothing, either. No more energy to do anything. When he wasn't arguing with Drago over the Bewilderbeast's abilities- "I need Toothless. I need another dragon. It doesn't matter, he's never seen another dragon, he can't learn until he knows who he is. I can't teach him to be something he doesn't understand. It's impossible. Any dragon would work. Even if it was just a Hackatoo or even a Deadly Nadderâ€¦"- Hiccup was with Toothless.

Toothless wasn't doing all that well. His wing was infected, and while Hiccup had been careful in keeping it clean, there wasn't much he could do without proper medical supplies. When he had first started healing, all Toothless did was sleep. Now, he refused to sleep.

It took Hiccup hours to coax him into closing his eyes, and even then Toothless would only catch sleep in snippets- at tops, a half hour. And then he'd wake up, and Hiccup would have to start all over again.

Hiccup couldn't remember the last time he had slept: taking care of the Night Fury took all his time and effort. And when Toothless was finally sleeping, Hiccup would be marched over to teach Soot how to be a dragon. Which wasn't going to happen anytime soon.

Drago had gotten so desperate that he started bribing Hiccup: medical supplies if Soot breathed ice. Hiccup was nearly in tears with frustration. Until Toothless was better and he wasn't worrying over the dragon every single moment, he couldn't focus on finding a way to teach Soot how to be a dragon.

The next few days (months? â€¦years?) felt like they were on a infinite loop: lulling Toothless to sleep, playing with Soot, repeating the same argument with Drago over and over and over again.

* * *

><p>In the rare moment of sleep he got one night, he dreamed of Astrid.<p>

He dreamed about some conversation he had with her, one that he didn't remember upon waking up. She had been angry with him, but it hadn't mattered.

He hadn't thought about her in a long time. It gave him a feeling of nostalgia when he woke up. Astrid felt like a thing of the past. Like he had last seen her lifetimes ago and not just three months ago.

They were supposed to get married.

He was supposed to marry the girl of his dreams, the beautiful, strong Astrid who grounded him, and kept him out of trouble.

Now she was just the girl of his dreams.

He didn't sleep after that. He didn't want to torture himself with the impossible.

* * *

><p>Don't know where that last bit came from. I don't know. I just needed to be done with this chapter and so.

>I'm done.

Here's a rant no one asked for

>Gah I hate writing you don't understand all I want to do is write this one scene. Like I just want to skip to it but I can't and this story is so long and keeps getting longer. It's honestly like my muse has grabbed hold of it and won't let go and is trying to stretch it as much as he can. Also, the chapters are so short that they start driving me insane. They're easier to write that way, but going back over them (and heaven forbid, reading them) makes me want to pull out my hair. Don't worry, I will see Dragon Master to its completion, but this story is pretty darn painful sometimes.

**

Some good(ish) things to point out about my fan fiction life:

>The amount of time it takes me to write this story is truly sad. Sometimes I have to walk away for a few days just to put my thoughts back together to finish a chapter, and for that I'm really sorry. I wish I could pull the same stunt I did for the HtTYHuman (less than a year, hah), but for this one, I just can't. (Probably a good thing considering how bad HtTYHuman is ((rewriting it is so fun, ohmygosh. So many ideas, and so much more depth and so much less cheesiness and stupidity and failure))).

**It would probably help if I could focus on one project at a time. But right now I'm piecing together my next big story. It's very different (it's not about torture ((What?! Really?! Glass _NOT_ writing about characters being ripped apart? Big surprise there!))), but I think it'll be a lot better than this one since I've got a very strict structure for it already. **

**And that's just one of the many, many, many stories I'm working on right now. It's ridiculous. I have over 100 HtTYD stories I've started outlining. I'm _NOT KIDDING_. That doesn't include non-HtTYD stories/crossovers. So if I take a long time updating, maybe knowing

that I'm working on other HtTYD junk will make you feel better?
**

**And as usual, many thanks, internet cookies, and love for those who support this story. It means more to me than any of you could ever know. Thank you for your patience, your kindness, and your ever-persistent and irrational belief that Hiccup and Toothless will make it out of this fic okay. It brings me joy. (You can't tell but I'm grinning in a very evil way.)
>Really though, thanks.

26. No More Circles

So, this was unexpected. Sure, I leave gaps in my outline, but thisâ€¦ this is wrong. This is already looking to be about 50 chapters, give or take, if I continue in this chapter length. I keep adding chapters. Most of them are just small things, or turn out longer than I expected.

Hiccup has decided to change things up. "_Screw you, screw your outline, screw anything you had planned for next chapter. I'm a Scottish princess, so I'll choose my own fate, thank you very much_", is pretty much what he did.

I wasn't expecting Soot to have imprinting problems, to be incapable of being a dragon. And I certainly was surprised when Stormfly showed up. Really though, she wasn't supposed to be in this story.

And now _this._

Another detour chapter to make this story just that much longer. Excuse me while I go scream into my pillow.

* * *

><p>Chapter 26: No More Circles

* * *

><p>"Hi, beautiful," Hiccup said as he greeted Stormfly. She screeched loudly, nearly knocking him down in her enthusiasm to see him. "Okay, okay, I'm not going anywhere, you can calm down now." As he rubbed at her scales and scratched horns, he carefully examined her. No physical injuries though, thank Thor, but her lovely blue scales were dull and lightened with depression and anxiety. Hiccup tried not to think about how much Toothless's scales had grayed.<p>

"You missing Astrid?" The name felt strange in his mouth, and it took more effort to say her name than he would have liked. At her name, the Deadly Nadder perked up, glancing around like she thought Astrid was about to walk in at any moment. "Me too, Stormfly. Me too." He sighed, rubbing at his eyes. "Let's go on a trip, huh?" He carefully freed her from her chains. The dragon was very excited, bouncing around happily. He knew what she was thinking. Hiccup was taking her out, and from there she could find Astrid. Hiccup smiled. "Just don't forget about me, okay?" He was counting on her finding Astrid and leading her back to Drago's Lair.

He hadn't cleared this with Drago. Drago would probably throw a fit. But this was the only way that both of their plans could succeed.

The Viking overseeing Hiccup's trips to take care of the injured and hunted dragons backed up when he saw the Nadder had been freed. Humongous pulled his axe free from his belt, ready to attack the moment the creature exited her cage.

Hiccup was, of course, anticipating this kind of reaction, and made sure to stay between Stormfly and Humongous. Humongous was not Hiccup's biggest fan, and Hiccup couldn't honestly blame him. "I'm bringing her with me," Hiccup informed him. He calmed Stormfly with a gentle word, and she hopped down the hall after him.

It took Humongous a moment to realize what had happened. He wasn't the brightest man, and he wasn't really expecting the Master of Dragons to just march off down the hall with a Deadly Nadder in tow. Said Master of Dragons was about to get him in trouble again.

Humongous took off after Hiccup, wanting to catch him, but there was a dragon right behind the boy. Humongous didn't really want to take on a Nadder by himself. And if the boy got hurt, there was a chance the Night Fury would come after him as well. The Night Fury had killed many before.

All he could do was hiss at Hiccup, hoping that the Nadder wouldn't turn around and attack him and that Hiccup would realize how much trouble he was putting Humongous in and return Stormfly to her cell.

His hopes didn't come true.

Hiccup marched himself and Stormfly right into the arena, ordered Humongous to open Soot's cage, and then put himself to the task of figuring out how to release Stormfly.

Gobsmacked, Humongous did not free the Bewilderbeast as asked and instead stood where he was, gaping at the small chieftain. Even bloodied, beaten, clothes torn and very smelly, he looked every inch a Dragon Master.

Humongous could not say no.

He opened the Bewilderbeast's cage, and Soot came tumbling out, having heard the familiar voice that meant food/playtime/swimming/fun. Stormfly looked a little unsure about this development. Hiccup wasn't sure what exactly to expect. He wasn't sure when Soot could claim his flock.

Flock claiming. Just another thing Soot had yet to learn. How did you teach that? Hiccup stepped between Stormfly and Soot. Soot was very, very interesting in Stormfly. He had only ever seen humans, so the creature before him was new and exciting.

For a few moments, the baby dragon was still, and Stormfly and Soot observed each other: Stormfly staring wearily, and Soot with eyes full of curiosity. Hiccup watched, his palms sweating. Would Stormfly

even get close to the dragon that was a potential rival to her own King?

The moment of tension passed quickly, as Stormfly stepped towards the Bewilderbeast and began preening him just as she would any baby dragon. Hiccup breathed a sigh of relief.

"Alright, Stormfly, I need your help." Hiccup put a hand on Stormfly's neck after the two dragon had gotten acquainted. "Think you could give us a little fire. Nothing fancy, just-"

Stormfly shot at the wall, adding to the collection of scorch marks already there. "Very nice," Hiccup said, and she purred.

Soot was fascinated by this development. He waddled over to the glowing crater as fast as his tiny legs could. He sat down in front of it, touched it with a nose, a claw, and then his tongue.

"Make you want to do anything?" Hiccup asked, keeping his distance from the melted wall. Unlike baby Bewilderbeasts, no part of him was fireproof.

Hiccup asked Stormfly to shoot a few more fireballs, which she happily agreed to. Soot thought this was a very fun game. Hopefully he'd try to copy Stormfly and eventually figure out how to breathe ice. This process worked for most hatchlings, so Hiccup hoped it would work for Soot as well.

* * *

><p>Drago was bound to find out eventually.<p>

It took longer than Hiccup had expected. Nearly a half-hour had passed before Drago had stormed into the arena, looking murderous. The man slammed his bullhook into the stone floor, and not, thankfully, into a dragon.

Stormfly froze as the Dragon Master entered, her eyes narrowing and her wings and tail raising in defense. It was all too obvious that she knew exactly who this man was. Hiccup wasn't surprised: dragons had incredible memories. She was not likely to forgive the man who had thrown her in chains- twice. Hiccup got between her and Drago, hoping to avoid having his only means of escape die.

Soot bounded towards Drago, happy to see the Dragon Lord who had stolen him away from his mother and destined him for a life of slavery. Drago paid him no mind, pushing past him, his smoldering eyes set on Hiccup. Oh, Thor, he was going to die.

"Put the beast back where it came from," Drago snarled, the scars on his face twisting uglily as he spoke. Stormfly was chained again, only keeping calm because of Hiccup's reassurance. No, no no. This couldn't be happening. He needed Stormfly in order to get out of here. He needed her in order to help Toothless get better. He needed her to get Astrid. He couldn't fail now. Hiccup didn't know how much longer he could bear being here.

"I need her." Hiccup tried to keep his voice as even as possible, but he couldn't stop the desperation catching in his throat like a sob. He wasn't sure who he was talking about anymore- Stormfly or Astrid.

"I can't. I can't do this without her."

He couldn't. He couldn't carry both himself and Toothless. Astrid had always shouldered his weight, always been there to fall back on when Toothless couldn't catch him. Maybe there had been a time when he was alone, before Toothless, before Astrid, before he and Dad had even come to terms, but he didn't know how anymore.

It hadn't mattered that the price for companionship and love had been his leg, he would pay it a thousand times over again to get them back.

Rogue stepped into the arena, and Hiccup wrapped his arms around Soot, pulling him a few steps back. The only man on earth who was worse than Drago. Hiccup knew that Rogue's orders came directly from the Dragon Master (it seemed Drago didn't like to do his own dirty work- Hiccup hadn't seen him actually lay a finger on a dragon, or one of his men in anger, he just had others do it), but Hiccup couldn't help but despise Rogue.

"You will teach that dragon to become the Alpha."

Here they went again. The same argument over and over and over again.

Hiccup's previous helpless distress turned into frustration, giving him a burst of energy he didn't know he had. "Does it look like I breathe ice? I need another dragon to teach him! He doesn't even understand the dragon language, he doesn't even know he's a dragon! I can teach him, but I can't do it alone!" Hiccup took a deep breath. "You took your first Bewilderbeast as a hatchling, how did you teach him?!"

Drago looked Hiccup straight in the eyes, his expression unreadable. "I threw him in a cage with a hungry Savager." Oh, gods.

Oh, gods. Savagers were some of the most dangerous dragons in the Archipelago. They were one of the few types of dragon that would hunt, kill or eat others of their species. Hiccup had seen one once, tearing apart another dragon. He could easily imagine Soot in that situation, squealing in terror as the Savager's claws ripped through soft scales. And unless ancestral instincts kicked in, he'd be ripped apart and devoured.

Something in Hiccup went cold, thinking about that. The absolutely monster a person would have to be to throw a child, dragon or not) in such danger. Then again, that was something his own people did. Something his own father did.

Hiccup finally shook the thoughts from his head.

"An hour. Give me an hour with him, and St- the Nadder." Hiccup looked at Soot, "If he's not breathing ice, we'llâ€¦ we'll try this your way. Almost.

"If he's not breathing ice in an hour, you throw me to the Savagers."

* * *

><p>Yeah, the ending surprised me as well. Why do you have a death wish, Hiccup? WHY. Please stop messing up my story. I love you, but please, I work so hard and then you're like: "No, I'm not going to just do what the outline says. I'm not just going to pull Stormfly from her cage and (spoilers). I'm also going to make this as painful as possible by making you write two more chapters where I am in mortal danger and screw everything up. Don't tell me you hate it because I know you love it."**

screaming

(Savagers are pulled straight from the books.)

End
file.